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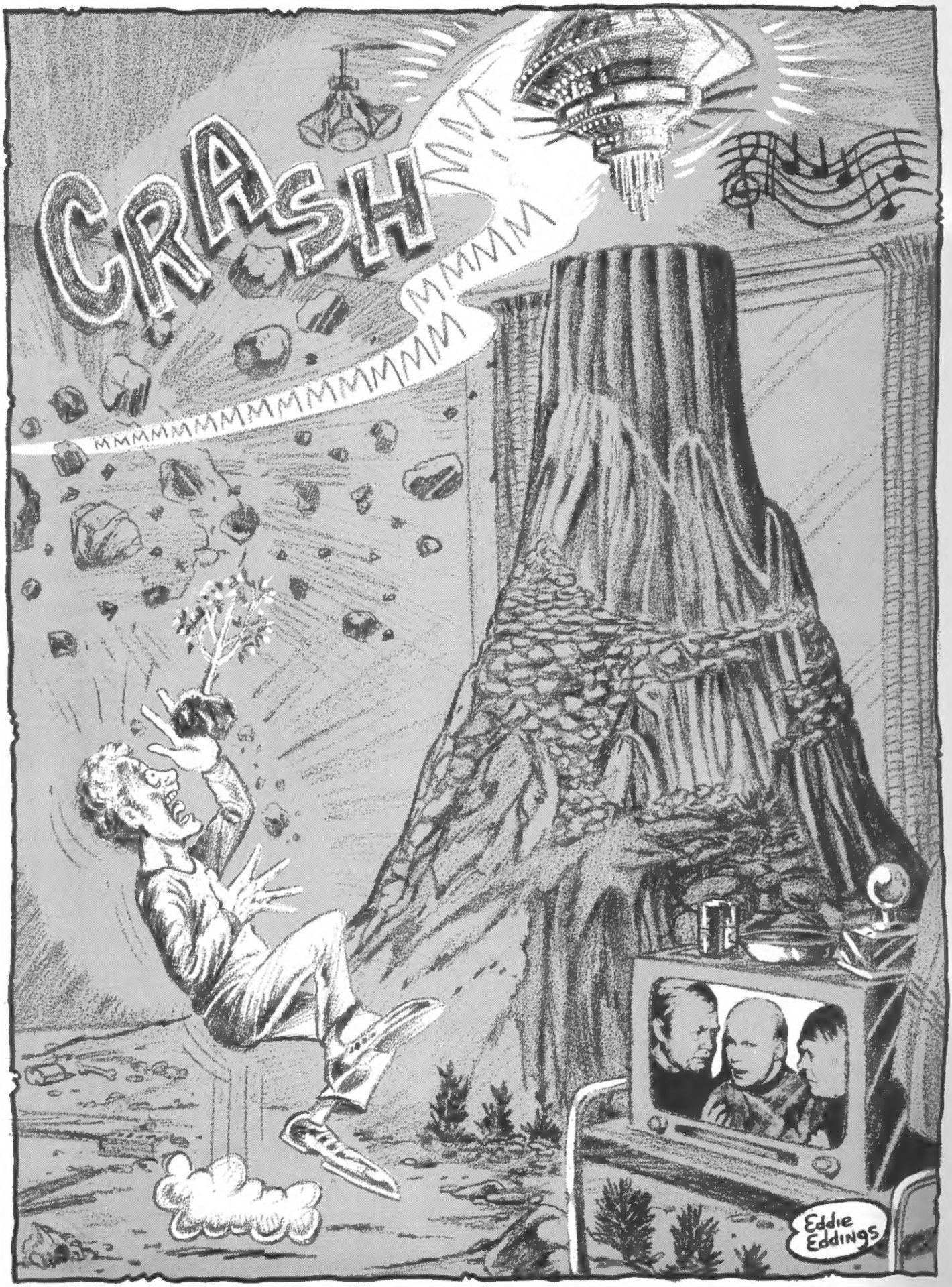
CRASH
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Eddie Eddings

ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICOLLECTOR

NO. 142

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FRONT COVER - RALPH FOWLER
CENTERSPREAD INSERT - RALPH FOWLER
BACK COVER - KERRY GAMMILL

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IMPORTANT!

THE ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR THE ROCKET'S BLAST - COMICOLLECTOR

APRIL 1978

FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS: $20.00 per page - These ads occupy a full page when printed in the RB&CC. They may be submitted on sheets from 8 1/2 x 11 to 15 x 20, bearing in mind that it will be reduced down to 8 1/2 x 11.

HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS: $11.00 per page - These ads are reduced to occupy one-half page when printed in the RB&CC. ALL ads of this type MUST be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 paper ONLY.

ONE QUARTER PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS: $5.50 per page - These ads are reduced to occupy 1/4 page when printed in the RB&CC. ALL ads of this type MUST be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 paper ONLY.

REGULAR CLASSIFIED ADS: 15¢ per 7 inch typed line - These ads are reduced to occupy 1/4 their size when printed in the RB&CC. MINIMUM - 75¢

SPECIAL CLASSIFIED ADS: 40¢ per 7 inch typed line - These ads are printed as is (not reduced in size). MINIMUM - $2.00

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NOTE: ADVERTISERS DO NOT RECEIVE FREE COPIES OF THE ISSUES IN WHICH THEY PLACE ADS. WHEN SUBMITTING ADS BE SURE TO TELL WHICH TYPE IT IS. FULL PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ALL ADS. ANY ADS RECEIVED AFTER ANY DEADLINE WILL BE RUN IN THE FOLLOWING ISSUE WITHOUT EXCEPTION. SEND ALL ADS AND PAYMENTS TO: THE S.F.C.A. - 9025 S.W. 48th Terr., Miami, Fla. 33165

CIRCULATION: 2200 PER ISSUE

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

THIRD CLASS: 5 issues $6.75, 10 for $12.50, 15 for $16.00, 20 for $21.00
FIRST CLASS: 5 issues $9.50, 10 for $18.00, 15 for $23.00, 20 for $29.00
DOUBLE ABOVE RATES FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS OUTSIDE OF NORTH AMERICA.
SINGLE COPY: Third Class $1.75 + 50¢ postage, First Class - $2.75

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your RB&CC has the word EXPIRED on the label when it arrives, it means that your subscription has ended and should be renewed immediately to avoid missing an issue. When renewing subscriptions, be sure to state the issue number of the last issue you received.

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF THE RB&CC ARE LISTED BELOW. THEY ARE $1.75 EACH FROM THE S.F.C.A. Add 50¢ postage.

#'s 57, 58, 106, 107, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141 (139 = $3.50)

THE ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR is published by James Van Hise, 9025 S.W. 48th Terrace, Miami, Florida 33165. EDITOR & PUBLISHER: JAMES VAN HISE, EDITOR EMERITUS: GORDON B. LOVE
STAFF ARTISTS: Hilary Barta, Steve Fabian, Ralph Fowler, Kerry Gammill, Marc Hempel, Don Rosa, Tom Sutton, Ron Wilber and Mike Zeck. Contributions are always welcomed, but if you want it returned be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope or return postage.

THE ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF THE RBCC ARE: APRIL 21st
JUNE 9th

THE RBCC IS PUBLISHED EVERY 7 WEEKS.

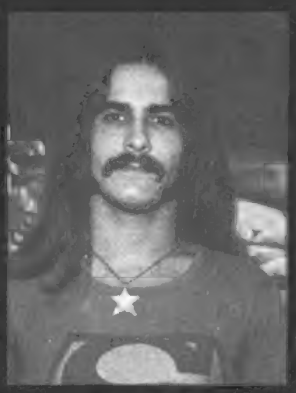
ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THIS ISSUE (#142) ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE ABOVE ADDRESS FOR $3.00 + 50¢ POSTAGE.

RBC CONTRIBUTORS

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. What images this film evokes, and we tried to capture as many of them as possible in this issue. Unlike our STAR WARS special which was planned a year before the issue came out, this one wasn't planned until after I saw the film because I knew so little about the film before I saw it. Usually I can anticipate these things, but I knew too little about CE3K to do so. Who would have ever dreamed of anything like the Mothership?

Our contributors this issue approach the film from many different perspectives to present a more well rounded impression of the film.

RALPH FOWLER not only provides a spectacular full color front cover as well as a centerspread insert (a first for the RBCC), but Ralph also does a short article on the film. If you want to really blow your mind on the insert, then take a magnifying glass and examine the landing base below the Mothership. The detail is all there!



FOWLER

KERRY GAMMILL provides not only a spectacular back cover, but an excellent title page as well.

DON ROSA does a wonder filled piece of art in a non-humorous vein this time while EDDIE EDDINGS turns in a marvelous cartoon that is very much in the Don Rosa tradition of zaniness.

BRAD EPSTEIN reveals the unrevealed in his drawing which I've appropriately dubbed "Havoc in the kitchen". Now we know...

JIM KUZEE returns with more of his unique pencil drawings and displays a talent which is perfect for capturing scenes from CE3K. Jim also did the small spot illo on page 11.

BARTA

MARC HEMPEL provides an excellent character illustration of the film's stars, capturing them beautifully.

MATT FERTIG came up with the idea for the editorial logo which I think is extremely appropriate. Matt also did a uniquely impressionistic drawing of the Mothership.

We also came up with some unusual articles from JOHN FISCHNER (a sculpter and a gigantic fan of Ray Harryhausen who has also done articles for the FILM COLLECTOR'S REGISTRY), ALEX KOEHN who has also contributed artwork to the RBCC in the past, MARK BURBEY, RALPH FOWLER and yours truly.

RON WILBER not only scores once more with his wild and whacky "TWILIGHT OF THE HEROES" but he also provides a two page strip done especially for the CE3K theme. It has an originality which really sparkles.

DON ROSA not only provided a special drawing (besides writing the INFORMATION CENTER), but Don also lent me quite a few comics to choose from for the gallery in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOUR COLOR KIND (the title was suggested by Don as well). The cover gallery contains some unusual comics from the fifties and sixties.

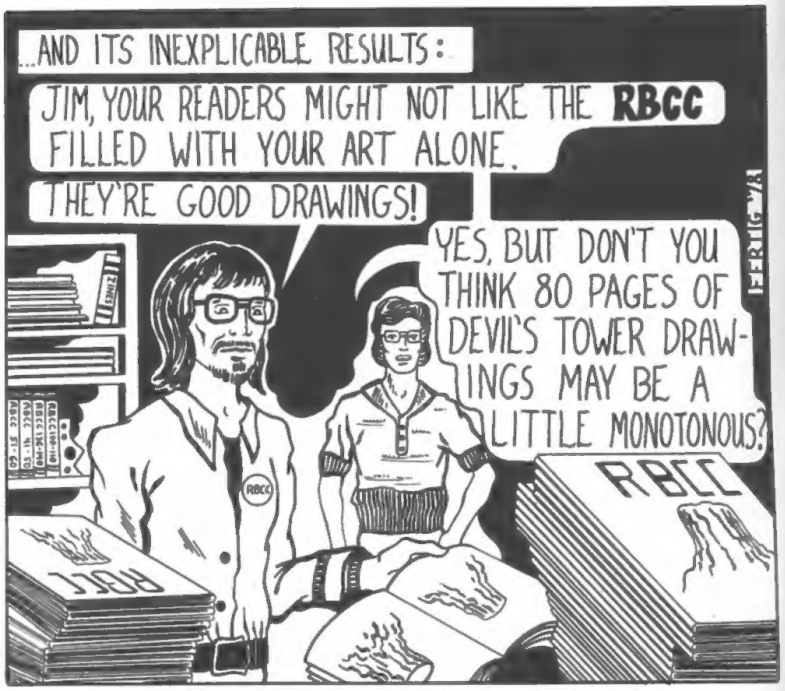
Unlike past special issues, this has most of the regular features such as COMICOPIA, COMICS COMMENTARY and CRITIQUE.

We also print a letter I received from the Star Wars Corporation which says some surprising things.

HILARY BARTA cooked up a couple clever strips for IC this time, besides his usual art.

PERTWILLABY PAPERS has a roaring turn of events that will catch you totally unawares!

All in all, this special issue has something special for everyone.


...AND ITS INEXPLICABLE RESULTS:
JIM, YOUR READERS MIGHT NOT LIKE THE RBCC FILLED WITH YOUR ART ALONE.
THEY'RE GOOD DRAWINGS!
YES, BUT DON'T YOU THINK 80 PAGES OF DEVIL'S TOWER DRAWINGS MAY BE A LITTLE MONOTONOUS?
RBCC
RBCC
RBCC
MEDIASCENE

EDITORIAL

As usual on issues with as many contributors as this one, it ran a little late. Ralph Fowler knocked himself out on these two paintings (they took him about a month to do) and never even had the time to do the third one he'd intended doing. He delivered the paintings in person (he lives 250 miles away) and then spent a couple days in Miami relaxing while I split my time between working on the RBCC and dressing up as Darth Vader to appear at the Dade County Youth Fair to help promote an SF & comic store I recently openned in Miami called "The Galactic Outpost". The fair lasted ten days and attracted about half a million people this year. Two years ago I was never this busy, but then two years ago I wasn't having this much fun either. I guess when I'm busy I don't have time to be bored.

The drawing by Brad Epstein of havoc in the kitchen is for sale if anyone wants to contact me for details.

THE COMICS JOURNAL is doing a series of articles on comic fandom. #39 featured an article on MEDIASCENE and TCJ #40 will have one on the RBCC. It should prove to be interesting and I'd definitely like to hear your comments on it when the piece appears.

Next issue, #143, will feature articles on the weird worlds of Steve Ditko and Basil Wolverton. I'll be including a lot of rare examples of their art, mainly pre-1970.

Issue #144 will have a feature on Brian DePalma, the director of CARRIE and THE FURY. Other features soon will include "Films Fantastique" columns on YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, THE 7 FACES OF DR. LAO and THE TIME MACHINE done in the unique RBCC approach. Be there, won't ya'?

* * *

Dear Jim:

Thank you for the recent issue of RBCC. Although I have long since lost interest in comics fandom, RBCC renews the faith a bit, showing the need for publications catering to those with a sense of aesthetic appreciation, who can differentiate between the consumable BUYER'S GUIDE, ephemeral as yesterday's newspaper, and a publication that has grown with the times. I subscribed to RBCC years ago -- it was the first fanzine I had ever seen, and the mere thought of such a publication, crudely bound with pages of ditto, mimeo and offset, excited me to no end. Even now, years later, I still enjoy RBCC, but for different reasons: the ads with comics for sale are a thing of the past to me, but the informative articles, the handsome art by your regulars, and your book reviews make RBCC a joy to receive.

I always enjoy seeing what you've done -- quite a change from the usual gosh wow atmosphere of most comic fans; a distinct serious impression about comic art, for a change.

George Beahm
P.O. Box 203
Wilmington, Mass. 01887

Jim,

Ah, Jim, Jim, Jim. I am really and truly surprised at you. Need three guesses as to why? I wish you had given GLX SPTZL GLAAH! #1 a '7' so we could do a rebuttal in the pages of the RBCC, not in letters or apas.

You really confused yourself, didn't you. GLX SPTZL GLAAH! is three words,[EDITOR'S NOTE: THEN WHY IS IT ONLY ONE WORD ON THE ZINE'S COVER?] you're the first person who didn't realize that (this includes various passers-by at cons who couldn't pronounce it, but tried in such a way that they realized the number of goddam words). Second, you got the furshlugginer PRICE wrong. TCR & TBG both got it right at 60¢, wha' happened? [YOUR COVER LETTER GOT STRAYED. WHAT'S WRONG WITH LISTING ALL THAT INFORMATION IN THE ZINE ITSELF? I COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND THAT PRACTICE OF NOT PRINTING ALL OF THE INFO OF A ZINE INSIDE THE ZINE. I'VE EVEN HAD PEOPLE SEND ME ZINES WHICH LISTED NO KIND OF PUBLISHING INFORMATION WHATSOVER, AS IF THE ZINE JUST APPEARED AS IF THROUGH IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.] I've never noticed you make such dumb mistakes before! Burbey, yes, but not you!

And then you didn't even read the zine for your review. In fact, you didn't even read the table of contents! What am I supposed to make of this? I mean besides the obvious prejudice? You failed to notice an article by Ron Goulart (heard of him?) or Gary Brown (sound like a familiar name, it was in the latest RBCC) or Mark Evanier or Rich Morissey! It's all there on the ToC. [THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW IS TO DISCUSS WHAT TYPE OF ZINE IT IS AND BASICALLY WHAT IT HAS. THE REVIEWS IN "CRITIQUE" SELDOM LIST EACH AND EVERY CONTRIBUTOR. I TRIED TO DISCUSS AND ANALYZE THE ZINE, NOT PLAY "WHO'S WHO" IN FANDOM. IT WAS NOT NECESSARY. MERELY LISTING CONTENTS DOESN'T TELL WHAT THE ZINE DOES WHICH IS WHY I AVOID THE "TABLE OF CONTENTS" APPROACH. I DIDN'T LIST SOMEBODY'S NAME. SO WHAT? THAT'S NOT THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW. WHO DID

IT IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS HOW WELL IT WAS DONE OR WHAT IT DID. THIS REMINDS ME OF THE TIME I REVIEWED A ZINE AND REMARKED ON HOW GOOD A PARTICULAR INTERVIEW WITH A CERTAIN ACTOR WAS. THE PERSON WHO DID THE INTERVIEW IN QUESTION WROTE ME A LETTER SAYING THAT HE WAS VERY HURT THAT I DIDN'T MENTION HIS NAME IN THE REVIEW. I TOLD HIM THE SAME THING I JUST WENT INTO ABOVE. SOME ZINES REQUIRE A MORE THOROUGH REVIEW. I DIDN'T FEEL THAT YOURS DID.] Plus, it's a zine to make people aware of Shelly Mayer's work and bring back SUGAR AND SPIKE, not a zine for hard-core SUGAR AND SPIKE FANS ONLY! One of the major complaints is the lack of SUGAR AND SPIKE stuff! That's right! We have a short, rushed introduction to the characters which is also an intro to the fanzine and the part that compares editing techniques as applied to S&S, but no meaty article on the characters as we do on Scribbly, Black Orchid and even Three Mousketeers.

The obvious prejudice of your review ill-becomes someone from the "good ol' days of fandom." The RBCC has the only regular and "comprehensive" fanzine review column. Is this how you do it? Hell, I'll do reviews for you if you wish. I've just stuck myself out on a limb, no regrets if you actually take me up on it. 'Course I don't expect you will. The prejudice to all but certain types of zines cheapens the column.

Unlike the harangues of most people from the "good ol' days" you seem to put form over content. Isn't that a bit screwed up? Do you put adjectives and adverbs over nouns and verbs in a sentence. The analogy fits. The meat of a sentence/ the meat of a magazine. I don't understand making what a magazine says subservient to the format in which it's said.

May this letter is a waste of time. I hope not. Clarification?

Ken Gale
220 E. 85th Street
Apt. 5R
New York, N.Y. 10028

FIRST OF ALL, YOUR ANALOGY ISN'T VERY WELL THOUGHT OUT. THE PARTS OF A SENTENCE AND THE COMPONENTS OF A FANZINE ARE AS DIFFERENT AS NIGHT AND DAY. YOU'RE COMPARING APPLES AND ORANGES. I DON'T PUT FORM OVER CONTENT. I NEVER HAVE. RATHER, I CONSIDER THEM EQUALLY IMPORTANT. FOR INSTANCE, QUALITY ARTWORK REQUIRES A FORMAT WORTHY OF THE EFFORTS INVOLVED. IF, FOR INSTANCE, THE NOW OUT OF PRINT "BADTIME STORIES" BY BERNI WRIGHTSON HAD BEEN PRINTED ON NEWSPRINT IN A TABLOID FORM INSTEAD OF ON QUALITY PAPER IN AN 8 1/2 x 11 FORM IT WOULD HAVE LOOKED MISERABLE AND YOU KNOW IT. THE FORM WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE CONTENT. TO CONSIDER FORM AS BEING OF LESSER OR NO IMPORTANCE IS MYOPIC. ONE IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE OTHER. THE FANZINES OF THE SIXTIES, BY AND LARGE, STRESSED CONTENT OVER FORM DUE TO REASONS OF PURE ECONOMICS. TO CONTINUE THIS PHILOSOPHY WHEN IT ISN'T NECESSARY MERELY BECAUSE IT'S LIKE IT WAS IN THE OLD DAYS IS DENYING THE PROGRESS FANDOM HAS MADE. FORM IS IMPORTANT IN PRESENTING QUALITY MATERIAL IN A QUALITY FORMAT. IF THE MATERIAL IS EXCELLENT BUT THE REPRODUCTION IS SHODDY BECAUSE THE EDITOR CUT CORNERS IN THE WRONG PLACES, THEN THE PRODUCT WILL REFLECT THIS. THE GREATEST PRINTING AND PAPER IN THE WORLD WON'T SAVE POOR CONTENTS (AND I'VE REVIEWED ZINES WHICH HAVE TRIED TO DEFY THIS) AND THE GREATEST CONTENTS IN THE WORLD WON'T OVERCOME A POOR PRESENTATION IN WHICH ARTWORK IS PRINTED WITH SPOTTY REPRODUCTION (ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME THAT THIS IS FAIR TO THE ARTIST?). I NEVER CRITICIZED YOUR ZINE'S FORMAT. YOUR OBJECTION IS THAT I WAS NOT SERIOUSLY MOVED BY THE CONTENTS. I TRIED TO GIVE THE ZINE A FAIR AND OBJECTIVE REVIEW. I OFFERED IT TO OTHER PEOPLE I KNOW TO REVIEW, BUT NO ONE WOULD TOUCH IT. EVERYONE I SHOWED IT TO THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE. I EVEN THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE (SUGAR AND SPIKE ON THE COVER OF A FANZINE?) UNTIL I READ IT. I'D NEVER HEARD OF ANY SERIOUS INTEREST IN THESE CHARACTERS BEFORE THAT, AND THERE WAS A LOT OF S&S STUFF IN THERE AS THE SAME GAMES WERE PLAYED WITH THE S&S CHARACTERS AS OTHER ZINES DO WITH DUCKS (i.e. the Conan cliche' transfered to S&S, etc). I JUST FEEL (RETURNING TO THE DISCUSSION OF FORMAT) THAT IF SOMETHING IS WORTH PRINTING, IT'S WORTH PRINTING WELL. MY APPROACH USED IN PRINTING THE COLOR PAINTINGS IN THIS ISSUE (I.E. THE CENTERSPREAD) REFLECTS THIS ATTITUDE.

Jim,

I just finished reading your article on the Marvel Comics adaptation of STAR WARS in the RBCC 139 and the rebuttal presented by Roy Thomas in issue 140. I must say that I found no basis for Mr. Thomas' rather verbose and uncomplimenting reply. Sure he may have been sick of STAR WARS, but is that any reason to take out that hostility on the fan press?

One thing that sticks out in my mind is the fact that I've never read a letter from Mr. Thomas that was in any way complimentary or encouraging. Now that I think of it, all I've ever read were hastily written, wordy attacks on whomever has insulted 'Roy Thomas' last. Really, Roy, are you that chaste that you deserve no criticism?

I was utterly appalled at Roy Thomas' insinuations and statements concerning your fanzine and other zines in general. Does Mr. Thomas forget that one of his springboards into the professional comic book field was through his own fanzine ALTER EGO? I once heard that a lot of fans gone pro consider themselves too high and almighty for the lackluster ranks of fandom. Mr. Thomas' condescending attitude seems to indicate that he is one of these people.

Oh well, I think that anyone reading Roy Thomas' letter could see for themselves the disrespect that he holds for fandom. How does that saying go, 'Don't burn no bridges'!

Frank Antonides
19 Lake Drive
Freehold, N.J. 07728

James:

Just a note; from previous letters I imagine you've surmised I'm quite pleased with the continuing publication of THE PERTWILLABY PAPERS. With that same joy I look forward to each and every installment of Ron Wilber's INCREDIBLE "Twilight of the Heroes". I believe he's going to be a major force as an artist, very soon.

Steven Alan Bennett
842 Hunt Street
Akron, Ohio 44306

Dear James:

I just received my copy of RBCC #140 from Fantasy Mail Co. today and I want to thank you for the article and pictures on DARK STAR. Last February at the Univ. of Arizona's Desert Con V (annual SF convention) I walked into the film section early and caught DARK STAR from the point where Pinback is hanging on the elevator. I had no idea what was going on but I laughed anyway. I probably would not have seen the film but for that accident--I'd read about it in a book on SF films that I have but it wasn't one of those big name movies I wanted to see. The next day my sister joined me and I insisted we attend the re-showing of DARK STAR. We loved it so much we saw it again the last day of Desert Con V. I regretted the program book only had a picture of the ship as I wanted one of the crew. Thank you very much for providing it. I look forward to seeing DARK STAR again at Desert Con VI.

Oh yes, glad to see the Pertwillaby Papers. I caught the reprints in COLLECTOR'S DREAM and wanted more.

Ann Nichols
4864 Sioux Avenue
Sierra Vista, Az. 85635

I'M ALSO A BIG FAN OF DARK STAR. A LARGER ARTICLE ON THAT FILM WILL BE IN A FUTURE ISSUE OF RBCC. IT'S A GREAT MOVIE AND I USUALLY WATCH IT A COUPLE TIMES A YEAR.

"ICE CREAM!"

IMAGES ON A TAPESTRY OF WONDER!

AN OVERVIEW by John Fischner

On December eighth, the Houston press and publicity departments were gathered together for the sneak preview of a major event film, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. Boasting of combining the cream of the crop from JAWS & 2001, the publicity material teased the press as much as the public. Douglas Trumbull (2001 & SILENT RUNNING) handled the special effects, although not a single photo of his work was available. Steven Spielberg wrote and directed the film, but the book was only released the week of the preview. Except for the tantalyzingly incomplete press kits, the audience knew nothing of the film they were about to see.

As the theatre darkened and the credits began, the audience realized there was no music, even though John Williams (JAWS, STAR WARS) had scored the film. The murmering died to silence and stayed that way. The event had begun and for the next two hours a full auditorium sat spellbound.

That scene has been repeated now for many weeks in thousands of theatres all over the country. Undoubtedly it will be for many more. Why? Science fiction fans love special effects and many good films like DARK STAR, SILENT RUNNING and VALLEY OF GWANGI have become cult favorites even though they were box office flops. The critics may rave about the artistic value of the production or the meaning behind the plot, but those merits don't always sell tickets. Big name stars don't single handedly rescue a floundering production either on camera or at the box office. Good examples of that are TENTACLES and EMPIRE OF THE ANTS. What, then, is selling the tickets? People don't care about whether or not the film was made by Steven Spielberg, Dino DeLaurentiis or Walt Disney. The only thing people want to know is whether or not they are going to see a good film.

There is one other factor that works for or against any given film. The subject matter. There are lots of films about love, sex, history ancient and recent, war (on Earth and off), crime, horror and a good number of all around adventures in catagories of fictional, fantasy and non-fictional. But one can count on one hand the films made dealing with the subject of U.F.O.s.

Disregarding the science fiction films where the flying saucer landed or crashed, openning that particular set of circumstances, the subject of UFOs has seldom been approached. Why? It's not for lack of public interest. As many books are sold about unidentified flying objects in the name of non-fiction as are sold as science fiction, many with no more factual basis than STAR TREK. Anyone who has read the newspaper or heard radio or television newscasts has at one time or another heard an account of a UFO sighting. Some of you reading this may have made those sightings. Many more, like myself, just wish they could. This then is part of the key. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS gives the public an insight into a truly bizarre and yet wholly believable experience...seeing a UFO!

And yet it goes so far beyond that.

At this point we need to start examining the performers and talents, and motives, that were combined to bring us this experience. Steven Spielberg's inspiration and ability is of course the alpha and the omega behind this film, but let's not delve that deeply just yet. Let us unfold it like a rose opens, a layer at a time, much the same way it unfolded before the audience.

Unlike many films, the situation was created as the characters were introduced instead of afterward. The viewer immediately met Dr. Claude Lacombe, played by the Oscar winning director Francois Truffaut. (Mr. Truffaut, by the way, is no alien to science fiction, having directed Ray Bradbury's FARENHEIT 451). As Claude Lacombe, he was heading an investigation spurred by the unexplainable appearance of a squad of WW II fighter planes on a deserted Mexican air field. The planes were in perfect condition, hauntingly empty and had been on record as missing since 1945. Add to this a single witness, a shattered old man with what apparently is an intense sunburn, whose nearly hysterical account translates simply as, "The sun came out last night. It sang to me."

"What happened?", we ask. But we know.

Next is the equally isolated country home of Jillian Guiler and her five year old son, Barry. Executed with unbearable suspense, the young boy has his midnight Close Encounter though neither the mother nor the audience sees the creatures which the amazed child does. But both the audience and her are panic striken until she finds him in this forshadowing first episode. Let it be noted that in spite of the constantly excellent performance of Melinda Dillon as the mother, it is the fascinating expressions of that angelic child played by Cary Guffey that bring believability to the unearthly events.

The film at this point departs from the main cast long enough to confirm our suspicions and set the hook in the audience. The all too close encounters experienced by the airline pilots and the air traffic controllers was the perfect device. Never leaving the control room, relying entirely on controller's faces and the radar screen, the viewer was dragged into the helplessness of the controller's situation. The pilots were relating their fantastically terrifying experiences while the radar confirmed them and the listeners just sweat and grit their teeth. And it all ended with an eerie touch as the pilots chose not to report what could only be called a U.F.O.

The audience was chilled, wondering how many times that had actually occurred.

It is at this point that we meet our main character

Roy Neary, played by Richard Dreyfuss. As in all previous occurances, we meet the character in the middle of a situation instead of a graceful prelude and introduction. A power failure that darkens an entire community throws the local electric company into pandemonium. Roy Neary is a lineman. All we are shown of him is that he is somewhat impulsive and hot headed and then he too is sucked into extra-terrestrial events.

There is one more major cast member. Teri Garr who plays Roy Neary's wife Ronnie. One cannot help but sympathize with her in spite of the fact that she was deliberately refusing to understand the events, and thus jeopardizing her marriage and her security.

As an actress, Teri's credits are long and include Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN and recently OH GOD!. But perhaps her most memorable performance is a television role as a certain empty-headed secretary named Roberta Lincoln. She guest starred with Robert Lansing in one of the most popular STAR TREK episodes ever, "Assignment: Earth".

Add to all this talent a no-holds-barred technical crew headed by the brilliant Douglas Trumbull. The artistry in this film was not in simply the model or the matte work. Because of the almost documentary style of the picture, Trumbull was acutely aware of the need for realism along with the fantastic. He accomplished this consistantly with his handling of the space ships throughout the film. Part of this was due not to detail of the models, but rather how they were photographed.

All the models were built roughly one-twentieth life size with the exception of the mother-ship which was about six feet wide, a far cry from two miles wide as it appeared on film. Most of the ships were animated on mechanical tracks and then combined with preshot backgrounds via computer a la STAR WARS. (Note: John Dykstra worked for Douglas Trumbull on SILENT RUNNING while STAR WARS was still a dream. He doesn't try to hide it, either.)

This over simplified description of the basic technique becomes increasingly more complicated when one realizes some of the special problems CE3K presented to the film makers.

First of all, the entire drama takes place on Earth and not in space. In space everything can be seen with crystal clarity no matter what the distance. That's easy to depict. Just keep the camera focused. On Earth, however, crystal clarity is not always the case. The air is not always clean and we sometimes experience fog. To gove the UFO's the soft glow of atmospheric diffusion, Trumbull simply reasoned that to realistically photograph ships on a one to twenty scale he had to use air that was twenty times dirtier than normal. He shot all the model work in a room with a precisely controlled and circulated haze of smoke. The crew had to wear gas masks.

Another touch of genius was the ominously rolling clouds which masked the approach of the aliens. What we saw were not clouds of gas but rather paints squirted into a seven by seven foot wide by four foot deep glass tank of water. The flashes of light were accomplished with probes while the lightning was done on separate footage and combined later.

Because of the fact that the base, "Dark Side of the Moon" was actually built in an aircraft hanger, all the exterior shots of the base at the foot of Devil's Tower were mattes (combinations of two or more pieces of film). Because this kind of shot invariably is flawed with matte lines at the borders of the joining places, Trumbull had a crew of matte painters retouch each shot as the images awaited rephotographing on the frontal projection stand, so that with the aid of fill-in paintings the blend was gentle and natural.

One starts to become awe struck at this point. Let's break away from the plot, cast and effects for a moment and look at the film as a whole. Indeed, the film was masterfully directed and the cast and crew were more than adequate. So what went wrong? Why did such a large portion of the audience leave unsettled and unsatisfied? Not that they were displeased or felt cheated. Just the feeling that something was missing.

They were right.

Steven Spielberg apparently suffered the same ailment as many young directors (and some old ones). He was too close to the project to see its flaws. This was his first screenplay.

Being an action director, he introduced his characters in an action situation. Most of the time this works well but it was here in the construction stages where the major flaw occurred. Our main character is a man whose entire life has been distorted by an encounter with a UFO. He is pathetic as he humiliates himself and his family at the supper table by sculpting mashed potatoes. But the audience can no longer identify with him when he shoves bricks and bushes through his kitchen window. We are curious as to what this maniac will do next but we all know that if our spouse acted like that, we'd leave too.

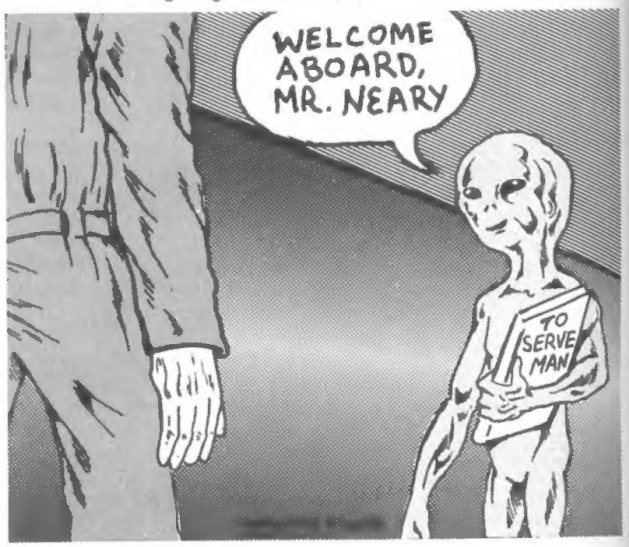
There were moments where Dreyfuss' performance redeems the character. One such was when they were caught by the army and in spite of all the bodies of livestock and the presence of gas masks, he still insisted, "There is nothing wrong with the air!"

But this, and a few other good lines, were not enough to carry the character. One realizes that Roy Neary was programmed by the aliens. He had never seen Devil's Tower much less driven there. He had about as much control over his actions as a migrating bird or a caterpiller spinning a cacoon.

If the audience had followed the actions of Prof. Lacombe more closely, the film would have taken on a more investigative air of discovery. But more importantly, we'd have had a real live human being to relate to. This was a flaw.

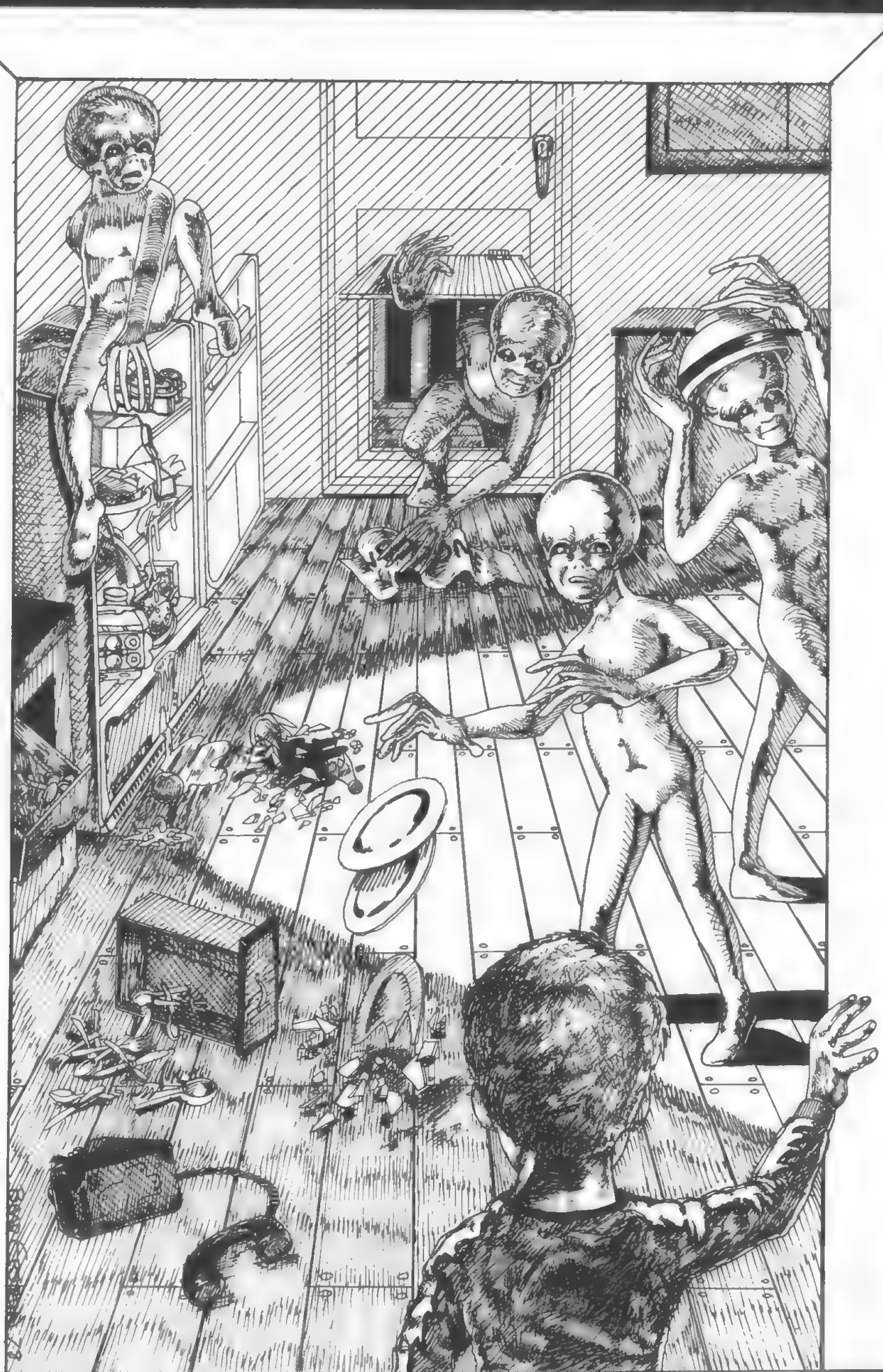
Most of the audience could not even feel happy for Neary when the alien took him into the mother-ship. But there was an even deeper reason than lack of sympathy for that one; lack of trust.

For all we knew that batch of rubber fingered munchkins was going to eat him!



In the book, Spielberg detailed how after the ramp of the mother-ship opened, the aliens emerged and went among the crowd. They sensed those that were afraid and avoided them in favor of those that were not. There was touching and laughter. The aliens made no sounds but colors washed over their bodies chameleon fashion as their emotions changed. At the high point of this we see Prof. Lacombe kneeling in a group of four or five aliens, laughing and playing, holding one on his knee.

At this point the volunteer squad came out. Under



these circumstances we are reassured that the aliens are affectionate beings with only good intentions.

As it came off in the film, it looked almost like an exchange program until they took their guys and ours too!

Who do we blame for that? Spielberg shot the aliens three different ways and still didn't achieve his goal. Where was Douglas Trumbull through all this?

Carlo Rambaldi is accredited with the "realization of the extraterrestrial". Why has no one bothered to give a line of thanks anywhere since? His smiling alien enhances many magazines right now and is one of the most memorable moments in the film. Who is Carlo Rambaldi and how did he get involved to begin with? Could it be that the fan press is deliberately ignoring him because of his major involvement with the 1976 KING KONG?

Obviously, looking back on CE3K, it cannot stand up to repeated viewings the way JAWS or STAR WARS can. But Steven Spielberg is a young director and this was his first screenplay. The millions it is making for Columbia Pictures do make the mistakes more forgivable. Besides, now he's learned.

The next one will be better.

ALLUSIONS IN THE ILLUSIONS by Alex Koehn

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND is not truly a science fiction* film (or story) nor does it fit comfortably within the realm of what is commonly referred to as fantasy (it's too plausible). Many people seem to be interpreting it as a mystery film, not so much a "who dunit_ as a "who is is?" or "why?"

Steven Spielberg has pleasantly muddied the waters by allowing people, in both articles and interviews, to go off on a superfluous tangent by getting totally involved with all the little allusions to Walt Disney and Disney films: The mother ship being closely associated with Cinderella's Castle, the little red fire-light saucer reminiscent of Tinkerbell, Roy Neary being called "Jiminy Cricket" because of his love for the song "When You Wish Upon A Star," which is in itself integral to the appreciation of the film. Even Neary constructing his "play-mountain" reminds you of the special effects department, and you almost expect Uncle Walt's voice to come on to explain how the mountain will be used in Disney's next feature.

Spielberg makes no attempt to discourage this line of thinking and in fact contributes to it, explaining how much he loves Disney's work and how they were the only films he ever went to see as a kid. By saying so, he's muddying the waters a little more, throwing you off the track, making you go down the wrong corridors only to come to deads ends with no satisfaction to the mystery this movie is.

You see, there are definite allusions to this movie. When you are confronted with them they are like seeing R2-D2 mounted on the mother ship for the first time: You wonder how you missed it in the first place; after all, it's so unsubtle.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that CE3K is really the story of something else and that to truly appreciate the film you must understand what that something else is. For example, someone once explained to me that the reason I thought the Hobbit was boring was because I didn't understand that it was a metaphorical retelling of the story of Jesus! That is not what I'm saying about CE3K.

Steven Spielberg made his own movie: "Boy meets saucer, boy loses saucer, boy gets saucer," and during the course of the film, he chose to allude to (thus also complimenting) someone else's films, much like Lucas did in Star Wars. Most people are picking up on the Disney motif, but I believe this is Spielberg's subterfuge.

I am like Neary. I empathize with him. There is something here. I am compelled to find it. What is it? As in the scene where he runs into the back yard and screams to the heavens, "What does it mean?" Why is it important? Why do I sit through the movie over and over and say, "It's so obvious. Is that all it is?"

The first time I saw the film, it hit me during the scene in which Roy and Jillian are driving through Wyoming, before they are confronted with Devil's Tower. The John Williams music together with all that beautiful scenery instilled in me such a feeling of "deja vu" that I was momentarily quite uncomfortable. What did it remind me of?

North by Northwest.

Cary Grant and North Dakota and Bernard Hermann music and Mr. Rushmore became Devil's Tower and the crop-duster became a nerve gas dispensing helicopter and mistaken identity became "cover-up." And my head began to reel and I started to feel embarrassed, feeling that I was hallucinating into it too much that perhaps I was on the verge of being equal with your average Paul McCartney Is Dead clue collector.

But the clues kept coming: "Uncorrelated objects out of the north by northwest" and Francois Truffaut wrote the difinitive book on Hitchcock (Truffaut himself has stated he doesn't understand why it was important for Spielberg to cast him in this role).

So, if this is the case, where is Spielberg? He must actually appear in the film in true Hitchcock fashion. Then it dawns on me -- Spielberg! Spielberg is translated from German to English as "play mountain." There it is in front of me. Spielberg is Devil's Tower!

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND is not truly a science fiction film; it is fundamentally a suspense film going so far as to use Hitchcock's own definition of his heroes to explain Neary, "he is an ordinary man caught up in extraordinary circumstances."

This is not an entire interpretation of the film. The movie is too complex to pigeon-hole in such a way. Nor is this meant to be the movie's entire reason for being. I believe it is farily visible that there is more than a gentle nod in the direction of one of the medium's true masters. And, if anything, maybe Steven Spielberg just wanted to do a science fiction film the way Hitchcock would do one (he never has).

*I subscribe to the "if you take the science (be it physics, chemistry, psychology, sociology, medicine, economics, genetics, anthropology, etc.) out of the story and and story collapses, it is science fiction" definition.

* * *

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE MARVEL KIND by Mark Burbey

Marvel seems to be THE publisher of comic books adapting hit movies. Unfortunately, their track record has been something less than spectacular. We all know what happened when Marvel tried to adapt STAR WARS into comic book form. It could have easily been done well, but the wrong people were chosen to do it and the whole went down the proverbial drain quality-wise. THE DEEP adaption wasn't necessarily bad, but it was boring,

both in art and the script. Further, both the aforementioned movie adaptations were printed as 7 x 10 comic books, on cheap pulp paper that ink loves to soak into and smear around on.

Such is not the case with Marvel's comic adaptation of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. Through trial and error, Marvel has finally found the (almost) perfect format for movie-comics. I say "almost" perfect because it's not entirely possible to transfer a story told in one medium to another. It's possible, certainly, but in doing so you aren't going to be able to achieve the feel of fullness that was achieved in the longer original. It is a condensed version and it's going to appear as one. Once this is understood and accepted, it is possible to enjoy these adaptations as an art form in themselves.

Continuing with the point I was trying to make in the above paragraph, we must accept the reality that Archie Goodwin, who supposedly worked from the film's shooting script, was only able to fit so much into the magazine's 48 pages. All we get is the superficial story. Like the television adaptation of THE HOBBIT, the limited amount of space only allows us to get a mere gist of the plot tossed in with a good amount of the action. But this works out well, since comic books are mostly action, anyway.

A lot of this adaptation's appeal might very well stem from the readers' familiarity with the movie. Even though many of the film's characters and scenes are chopped down and stuffed into only a few panels in many cases, it is easy to relate to them and understand what is going on because we've seen it all before. If this was an original Marvel story and there was no film I think it would require several magazines of this size to make the story clear. The scene at the dinner table where Neary sculpts a miniature Devil's Tower with a bowl of mashed potatoes would make no sense at all if we hadn't seen the full sequence played out in the movie. Goodwin, however, through many excellent balloons of dialogue makes clear much of what is happening, eliminating the need for dozens of superfluous explanatory panels.

Outside of the condensing, the major differences between the film and the comic, script-wise, are that Marvel wasn't allowed to use the actors likenesses, and the addition of at least one scene that was edited from the final print of the movie. This is the scene introducing Neary and his family. Marvel also had to refrain from showing the aliens in any kind of detail. We see their shapes, which is enough I suppose, considering they only appear in a few panels. On the other hand, the Mothership is shown in full detail in a glorious two-page spread. In an afterword, Goodwin explains a little of why these differences exist and says that after the film was released, they were able to go back and make a few changes in the art. Not many were necessary, however.

I was very satisfied with the artwork by Walt Simonson and Klaus Janson. Simonson is one of the industry's better illustrators, with an excellent eye for layout and design. I can't say that I can fully accept the rather extreme number of typical comic book "grimaces"; there are certain scenes where characters are frowning in the middle of perfectly calm conversations. Klaus Janson has a rather unique inking style and it seems to be rather overpowering at times. Much of the finished art looks more like his than Simonson's, and I think it's mostly due to his inking that Roy Neary looks amazingly like Matt (Daredevil) Murdock's best friend, Foggy Nelson. (Janson was inking Gil Kane's pencils on Daredevil for awhile.)

Overall, while the art does not even begin to compare with that of super-talents like Wrightson, Corben, Smith or Kaluta (little comic art does), I found it extremely adequate and very enjoyable. Marie Severin, I should mention, did a fine job of coloring.

In the final analysis, this Marvel Super Special, as it's called, is merely a comic book based on a hit film and nothing more. If it was, as I said, an original comic with no film to cash in on, it would probably just be read and added to the collection as just another, albeit fine, comic. It makes a fine souvenir, however. In reading it, you can often hear the voices of the actors in your mind, and John Williams' beautiful music swirling in the background.

It is an obvious and accepted fact that comics are closely akin to films, and the idea of one adapting the other is sometimes a good one. But one need not look too closely to see which is the better medium for visual storytelling. The former will always be the developing son of the fatherly latter.

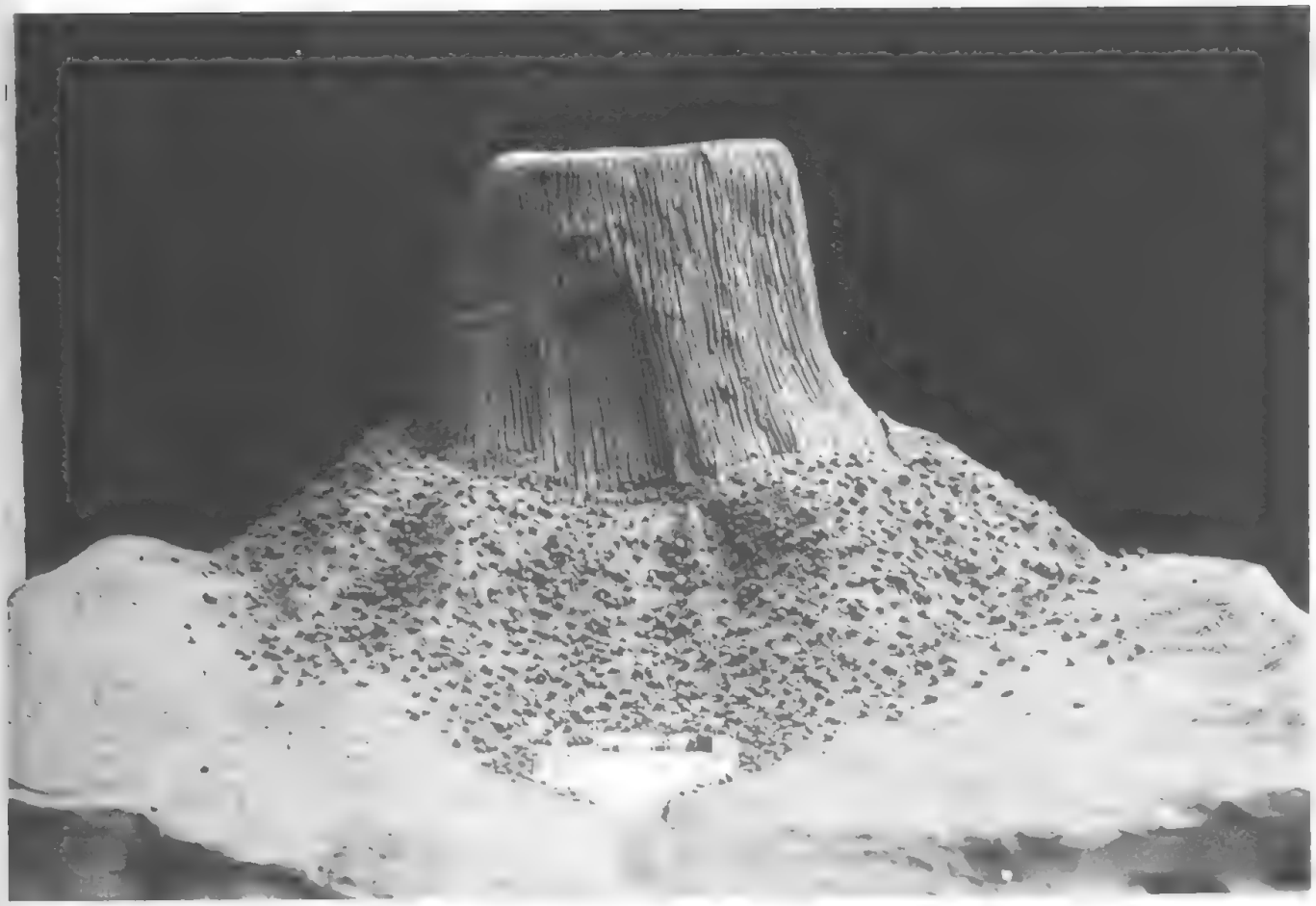
* * *

PAINTED SKIES by Ralph Fowler

I'm concerned. Concerned with people losing sight of the important things the movie has to say because they might not understand, or be misguided, about a lot of little things in the film. It seems that if more people had read the book it would have helped some. But much of my understanding of the movie comes from reading about Spielberg and what he wanted in the story and the film. Even reading some of J. Allen Hynek's comments gave me better understanding. As far as the writing itself (this is the only parallel I have found with STAR WARS) it's a director's book, a script with just enough extra descriptive insight and wording to make it tolerable to read as a book instead of a script. But I love digging all the factual material out of the story, because in the subject of space, and I'm sure it will prove to be true on the subject of extraterrestrial life, fact is always stranger and more fascinating than fiction. Even Trumbull's ship designs and movements in many cases are based on actual reports and sketches made by and for those who had seen them.

Now to effects. There's subtleties such as the small dots of light moving through the animated skies in the one scene right before Neary stops at the tracks and at Jillian's house when she looks out the window and sees Barry running in the field. And then there's the flagrant display of the Mothership which, as a couple of dummies have said, must surely be made to look like a fantastic Christmas ornament because it was released around Christmas. I've read that the reason it was released then was because Trumbull delivered the special effects ahead of schedule, or before anyone thought they would be finished. The design of the mothership is not very dynamic or impressive structurally or architecturally. What makes the mothership such a "mother" is its detail. Many hundreds of thousands of holes drilled with a jewelers drill is merely labor. The beautiful part is the infinately diverse artistic patterns used. The Mothership is not the biggest spaceship. It is not the best designed spaceship. It is the most detailed of any spaceship model used in any film. There is something artistic about almost every single detail. It is a total work of art down to its neon interior, not merely an exercise in the craft of modelmaking. What does the Mothership represent in the movie? In the book its size and complexity are all that come through, but in the movie what does its "look" say? Obviously it says that you should credit its complexity and artistic quality to the aliens. They apparently display their art and music. Can you imagine us contacting life on another planet by landing in a work of art, playing music? The Mothership is art, entertainment, an advertisement and a celebration all in one. Any beings that geared so much of their Mothership design so they could have a giant light organ display board to visually blow people away with have to have a sort of showmanship nature. If we humans did the same thing we'd be showoffs. Only advanced beings freed of struggle by knowledge to be innocent and enjoy

FERTIG '78



WHAT'S THIS? A BEHIND-THE-SCENES PHOTO FROM CE3K? NOT AT ALL. IT'S A MODEL OF THE DEVIL'S TOWER AND THE LANDING BASE SCULPTED BY RALPH FOWLER FOR USE AS REFERENCE WHEN DOING HIS PAINTING.

childlike games could get away with it without being concidered egocentric.

What I think is fascinating are some aspects of the effects crew, particularly Greg Jein. The first time I saw the name was about four years ago when I received a copy of the original "Star Trek Concordance" with blue paper covers held together with paperclasps. Inside was plenty and plenty of amateur Star Trek artwork, the best by George Barr, some really rough stuff by Tim Kirk, and a couple of other unknowns who have since made it more or less. One in particular, and in my opinion the most impressive, is Greg Jein. In the ST Concordance he did a lot of little drawings of hardware, weapons, phasors, and spaceships from photoswipes to renderings of the space submarine used in "Space Seed" and "Ultimate Computer". And now for him to be called the world's best (movie) model maker by Douglas Trumbull is the ultimate compliment. Pictures of him are in the CE3K issue of AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER issue working on the Devil's Tower model and standing next to Doug Trumbull, the Mothership and a movie camera. I'm surprised that no one ever thought to interview him about effects on CE3K as he must have had a hand in many of the effects, probably even the saucers. At least he would probably have as much to tell as Trumbull, who it seems has been interviewed or quoted by everyone to the point where the accounts are repetitive and contradictory on some details. Another thing that fascinates me as an artist are the matte paintings, around one hundred of them according to the AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER. When I saw LOGAN'S RUN I didn't think much about the matte paintings. I thought 'just another matte artist' and matte art almost always blows me away. I'd love to be that good. But after learning that Matthew Yuricich had won the Academy Award for LOGAN'S RUN and seeing photos of the size of the paintings he did for DAMNATION ALLEY in AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER, it's impressive to think of him actually doing about one hundred paintings for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND as AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER claims.

* * *

WONDER ON A TAPESTRY OF IMAGES by James Van Hise

It's difficult to write anything about CE3K and take a slant which hasn't already been taken...even before the film was released! I can't remember when a film was awaited with as much anticipation, or written about so extensively prior to its release, even though the people writing the articles had very little to write about at the time. The tight lid of secrecy prevented much of any substance to be written, so the articles generally discussed what it was thought the film would be like, or else they wrote about the secrecy itself. Even when Douglas Trumbull was on THE TOMORROW SHOW last September, he wasn't able to discuss CE3K very much and he had nothing which he could show from the film. Ergo, his former assistant John Dykstra garnered the lions share of attention for his work on STAR WARS, while Trumbull had to speak in generalities with nothing to back them up.

And yet one publication had an advance look at CE3K a year before the film came out. They gave the exact plot (something which was supposed to be a carefully guarded secret) and did it in such an offhand manner that one wouldn't think it was that important. This was in MEDIASCENE #22, buried in the coming attractions section on films. There it is. The secret Spielberg

tried to hide. Had any of the networks wanted to do the quickie ripoff movie-of-the-week to beat CE3K to the punch, they had everything they needed right there. This is the only place I ever saw this information appear prior to the information officially released by Columbia a year later. What this could have been, though, is a lift from the story a WASHINGTON POST reporter supposedly broke around that time. Steranko has lifted material, uncredited, from the POST before. I never saw that particular WASHINGTON POST story but merely heard that Spielberg had denied its accuracy. It would be interesting now to compare this POST story from over a year ago with the film as it finally emerged. The POST supposedly acquired this story from a reporter who investigated the film on location by interviewing technicians after working hours in taverns, etc. Can anyone verify this?

It's surprising that no one picked up on this in the many articles which were written in anticipation of the film's release. A great deal was written to trumpet the film's coming in order to make up for the fact that many of these same publications were caught unawares by STAR WARS, having heard little about it prior to its release, and not having gone out of their way to try and find out anything on the film. When STAR WARS took off like a rocket journalists all over the country realized they had been caught napping. They weren't going to let that happen again.

As much as there has been written about CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, there are some things which seem to have been overlooked. At first there was some discussion of CE3K being an homage to the SF films of the fifties, but then this approach to discussing it was dropped. There is a lot in the atmosphere of certain scenes which does remind one of certain fifties SF classics. The desert sandstorm scenes seem to harken back very much to the film THEM! But what seems to definitely be a subtle homage on the part of Spielberg is the scene when we first see one of the UFOs. It is through the rear window of Neary's truck. In the film EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS the first time we see the UFOs is through the rear window of a car! The methods used are totally different as Spielberg does it in a much more inventive manner, but the parallel remains. Since there have been so few films on UFOs per se, it can be assumed that Steve Spielberg viewed them all to avoid repetition and derive inspiration. His UFOs in CE3K definitely avoid the cliche' used in any other SF film. The sweeping grace and indistinct dancing images of the UFOs are designed to elicit awe and wonder, rather than fear and menace. Spielberg's UFOs have an ethereal quality rather than a cold, chilling reality such as in EARTH VS. or THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. Spielberg's UFOs are cautious where those in other films are bold. Even in the scene when Barry is kidnapped it occurs in the desolate countryside.

Steven Spielberg's direction involving the UFOs is so subtle and laid-back that when the Mothership appears it is the direct opposite from every approach used before. From indistinct images to super detail. Despite what Trumbull said on THE TOMORROW SHOW, they don't spend that much time panning over the ship. I would have loved to see them use a long shot such as Ralph Fowler concocted for his centerspread painting!

There were a number of scenes we didn't see in the film but which I wish we had. Spielberg had filmed a nice little suspenseful scene when Jillian is running through the dark, creepy woods looking for Barry. It climaxed in her running head on into a hideous scarecrow! It's the kind of scene leading from suspense into a jolt that the film needed as an extra touch. And of course there's the removal of "When You Wish Upon A Star" from the soundtrack between the film's premiere and its release. Another beautiful touch removed. Sigh. I wish I knew why he did it. CE3K is a great film which could have been even greater if he hadn't edited out these beautiful little touches.

Some people complain that the film raises questions which it doesn't answer. That the story isn't tied up all neat and tidy at the end like a comic book. That was the whole idea. Spielberg wanted there to be unanswered questions to make it more realistic because all through life we encounter situations and events which just happen but we don't know why or how. Life is not tied up neatly with answers as to the why and wherefore. We don't know why they went to all the trouble to kidnap Barry when the meeting at the Devil's Tower co-ordinates had already been arranged. A lot of things can probably be explained by the prankster explanation put forth by Ralph Fowler. How else can the business of the race through the toll plaza be explained? They are alien beings who think in ways which are quite probably alien to us in many ways. They don't just come from another culture (and there are many cultures on this planet whose ways mystify us) but they come from another world entirely? How can we expect to pigeonhole all their motives and actions into perfect parallels of human behavior? There is a classic example of this misreading of intent in THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. When Klaatu descends the ramp from his flying saucer, he presents a device which mysteriously pops open. A nervous soldier immediately interprets it as being a weapon and shoots him. Without thinking, he draws a parallel between alien behavior and our own.

So little is known about these aliens. We see two different kinds. A group of dwarfs as well as a completely different one which we assume is their leader since he (it?) is the only one to communicate (through the hand signal) with the humans. There is some debate as to the lead alien's gender. Some people seem to think it's obviously male, while others seem equally sure that it's female...even though it exhibits no characteristics of either sex. What it does exhibit is a face which is the spitting image of Cary Guffey in that brief instant when it smiles in the close-up.

Since CE3K isn't as obviously science fiction as is STAR WARS, some people have questioned whether it should be considered science fiction at all. Extraterrestrials have always been considered science fiction elements (until something happens to prove them to be otherwise). The presence of an element in a film which is unknown to science pretty much makes a film science fiction, however marginal. Some may prefer the term speculative fiction, but it would just be splitting hairs.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND is not the kind of science fiction that STAR WARS is and it's not meant to be. They were conceived independantly and in fact originally were to have been released about the same time. In September of 1976 Charles Lippincott of the Star Wars Corporation told me that CE3K and STAR WARS were having a friendly competition to see who would be released first. At that time CE3K was in the lead, but they later met with delays that put them six months behind STAR WARS. It would have been interesting to have seen them released at the same time. I think the treatment in the press would have been more equal than it has been, rather than CE3K having to live up to the reputation set by STAR WARS. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS shouldn't be compared with STAR WARS any more than Mel Brooks should be compared with Woody Allen. They are in the same realm, but their approaches are totally different.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is a drama. A film of characters in conflict with themselves, each other and the events they are caught up in. Roy Neary expresses their problems perfectly when he says, "I didn't want to see this". It just happened and his struggle to deal with it and finally to understand it changes his life forevermore. We empathize with his struggle and finally with his decision. When confronted with the ultimate truth of it all he turns his back on everything he has to become a part of it and we aren't even shocked because wouldn't we do the same?

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NERD KIND!

IDEA — JIM JONES

ART AND STORY RONALD WILBER

MICKEY'S ADULT WORLD
LIVE SEX SH NUDE GIRLS
PEEP SHOW
LATEST MAGA
HUSTLER, SCREW
ALSO ABCC
RRRRUUM
HONK
RMMMMMM!
DON'T WALK
RRRRMMM
COLUMBIA PICTURES
NOW FILMING
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND
NO ADMITTANCE
STAY OUT!
MAKE UP DEPT.
KEEP OUT
MAKE UP
PUTTY
HEY, YOU'RE ON!
WELL, THAT'S SHOW BIZZ!

FLYING SAUCER REPORT

ON JUNE 24, 1947, AN IDAHO PRIVATE PILOT NAMED *KENNETH ARNOLD*, WHILE FLYING HIS SMALL PLANE NEAR MOUNT RAINIER, WASHINGTON, SIGHTED *NINE* OR *TEN HUGE GLEAMING METAL DISCS* RACING ALONG IN A COLUMN, DARTING IN AND OUT OF THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAIN PEAKS AT A SPEED HE CALCULATED TO BE OVER *ONE THOUSAND MILES AN HOUR*. THIS *FIRST SIGHTING* SET OFF THE CONFUSED UPROAR CALLED *THE FLYING SAUCER*...

GOOD LORD!

1500'S

WOOD.

FOLLOWING KEN ARNOLD'S SIGHTING, REPORTS BEGAN TO POUR IN TO NEWSPAPERS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES BY SOBER, INTELLIGENT PEOPLE CLAIMING THEY HAD SEEN THESE SO-CALLED FLYING SAUCERS. FOR EXAMPLE, ON JULY 10TH, 1947, AT 4:47 P.M., ONE OF THE UNITED STATES' *TOP ASTRONOMERS* WAS DRIVING HIS WIFE AND FAMILY FROM CLOVIS TO CLINES CORNER, NEW MEXICO, WHEN THEY SIGHTED A *LUMINOUS CIRCULAR OBJECT* IN THE SKY...

LOOK! LOOK AT THAT!

ON THROUGH 1947, EXCITEMENT OVER FLYING SAUCERS ALTERNATELY FLARED AND FADED. BY THIS TIME, REPORTS WERE *WORLD-WIDE!* ALTHOUGH PENTAGON SPOKESMEN CALLED THE SIGHTINGS *"HALLUCINATIONS,"* A SMALL GROUP OF INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WITHIN THE AIR FORCE URGED A *SECRET PROBE* THEY WOULD *NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED*, BUT FOR *CAPTAIN THOMAS MANTELL*. ON JANUARY 7, 1948, CAPTAIN MANTELL WAS FLYING HIS F-51 NEAR *GODMAN AIR FORCE BASE, KENTUCKY*...

GODMAN CALLING MANTELL! COME IN!

THEY SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE. I HEARD THEM MOVING AROUND OUTSIDE, CALLING TO THE OTHER STAFF-MEMBERS... THE ARTISTS... THE SECRETARIES...

EVERYBODY SET?

YEP!

I PEERED OUT OF THE CLOSET KEYHOLE. SUDDENLY, I HEARD A HISSING SOUND. THE FRONT DOOR OF THE OFFICE MELTED OFF ITS HINGES!

GOOD LORD!

GREY SHADOWS LOOMED, MECHANICAL AT EASE!

THE ALIENS GLIDED THROUGH THE CHARRED DOORFRAME. I COULD HEAR THE GIRLS SCREAMING, AND THEN I HEARD THE SQUAWKING, RASPY VOICE

IS THIS E.C.?

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?

WE HAVE COME TO *DESTROY*... YOU! YOUR... STORIES HAVE BECOME... *HARMFUL*... TO... US!

NO! NO!

MY BLOOD FROZE. E.C.'S *ENTIRE STAFF* WAS OUT THERE. ALL OF THE ARTISTS... THE LETTERERS... THE SECRETARIES. THE ASSISTANT EDITORS... THE EDITORS...

WE *KNEW*... YOU WERE ALL GOING... TO BE... HERE *THIS EVENING*...

OH, *LORD!* WHAT HAVE I DONE

AND THEN I HEARD THE LETHAL CHATTER OF THE ALIENS' WEAPONS, AND THE SCREAMS AND SHRIEKS OF THE DYING STAFF

THERE'S HOPE IN THE SKY...

...RUPERT DANES TOLD HIS STUDENTS. "HOPE FOR REPRIEVE FROM MAN'S DESTRUCTION OF MAN. THERE IS LIFE THERE FOR US IF WE WILL ONLY HEED THE VOICES WHICH ECHO UNHEARD IN THE WORLD AROUND US." HIS STUDENTS THOUGHT HE WAS CRAZY AND THE TEACHER KNEW IT BUT HE INSISTENTLY WENT ON, "YOU MUST LISTEN AND OBEY! LISTEN... [illegible] HEAR THEM? DON'T HARDLY SEEM YOU HEAR THEM VOICES WANTING US INTO THEIR PEACEFUL WORLD?

ALL I HEAR IS NONSENSE IN DAD SENSELESS SONG TO-ONE OLD DANES EXAMINED BY A HEAD-SHRINKER!

[illegible] FEEDING ON HIS WONDERFUL ALL-KNOWING MIND. NOURISHED WITH ANTIQUATED OPINIONS AND EARTH-BOUND CLICHES. LOOK AS I DO. LOOK AND BELIEVE

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOUR-COLOR KIND

BY JAMES VAN HISE

As a phenomenon which was extensively written about and reported, Flying Saucers and the mystique surrounding them actually began in the mid 1940's. By 1950 they had become a main-stay in comic books. This section reprints a large selection of the more interesting flying saucer oriented covers from 1950 through the sixties and even one from 1975 (UFO FLYING SAUCERS #8) which seems to depict none other than Roy Neary as a victim of the same phenomenon which introduced him in the film CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND.

The comics pictured which date back to 1950 are FLYING SAUCERS #1 (which features a twenty page strip by a young Wally Wood) and VIC TORRY AND HIS FLYING SAUCER. The second one involves Vic Torry coming upon a downed flying saucer and inheriting it from its dying pilot in much the same fashion as Hal Jordan would become Green Lantern in SHOWCASE #22 nearly a decade later.

Another early book is WEIRD SCIENCE #9 from 1951. In most cases the aliens and the flying saucers were portrayed as being hostile invaders. In the case of this EC, rather than showing the aliens attacking us, it shows us attacking the aliens from their point-of-view. It's one of EC's most classic covers by Wally Wood. The story it goes with inside that issue makes the cover a symbolic one, for in the story the aliens are very human and are destroyed as invaders merely because the Air Force is unable to communicate with the alien ship as it approaches Earth. Thus the perspective is a reversed point-of-view as the scene is portrayed the way the Air Force thinks it is happening (the destruction of hideous invaders) instead of the way it really is. It's another of those issues which shows how different EC was from all of its competition at that time.

EC had some other pretty unique ideas involving flying saucers as well. WEIRD SCIENCE #21 featured a story titled "EC Confidential" in which it is revealed that the entire EC staff are the survivors of a colony of Venusians which were conquered by Martians. On page 6 of that story (pictured at left) the Martians seemingly destroy the entire EC staff, but it's revealed that it was just robot duplicates which were killed to trick the Martians. This story did some unusual things in that it featured flashbacks to previous EC stories, most of which involved UFO's (i.e. WEIRD SCIENCE #2 & #16). Although 25 years old, this story is still highly entertaining and carries with it that feeling of closeness which EC engendered between its readers and its staff.

EC was doing more and more with UFO's at this time as the public interest in UFO's grew by leaps and bounds. WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #25 featured a story called "Flying Saucer Report" which mixed facts with EC style fantasy, for the facts are related to the reader by a Martian in the guise of a human being (using that old "hypnotic screen" trick which I have not been able to turn up anywhere but in the pages of EC). The splash is on the page opposite.

WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #26 took the Flying Saucer Report concept about ten steps further, dropping out the fantasy and devoting and entire issue to straight reporting of factual UFO stories in comic strip form. They devoted an average of one to two pages to each case and presented them convincingly in a format which was a radical departure for comics at that time. The renderings by George Evans, Joe Orlando, Reed Crandall, and Wally Wood were all uniquely different, lending the proper documentary atmosphere to the project. The letter columns of the next two issues of this comic were filled with praise for their "Flying Saucer Report" issue. The cover of that issue appears in the gallery on the pages following.

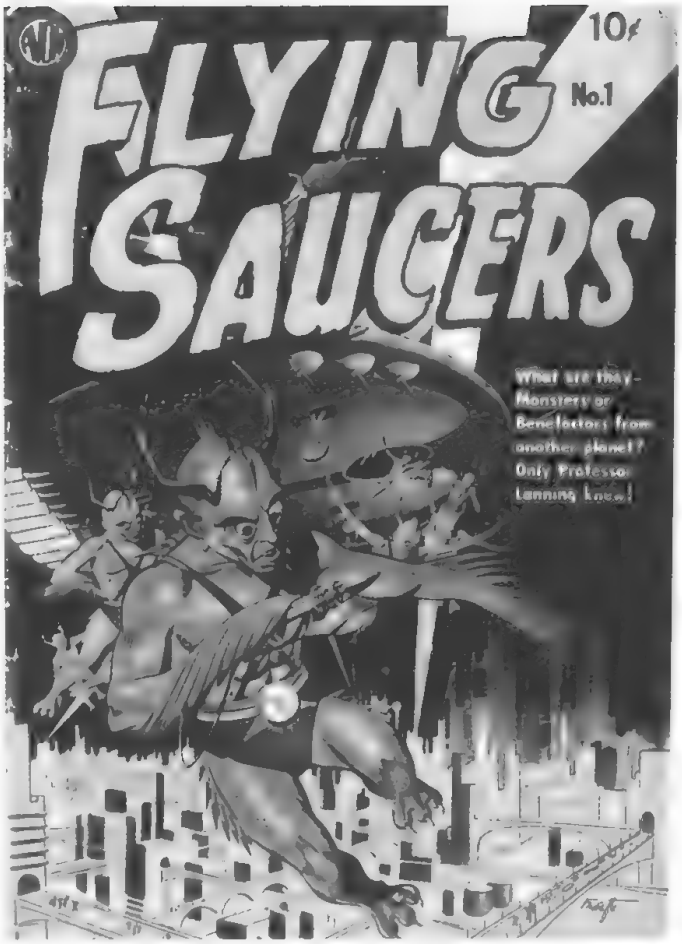
The drawing by Jack Davis on the opposite page is another CE3K EC style from the cover of INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION #32. Again, its approach is a bit unique.

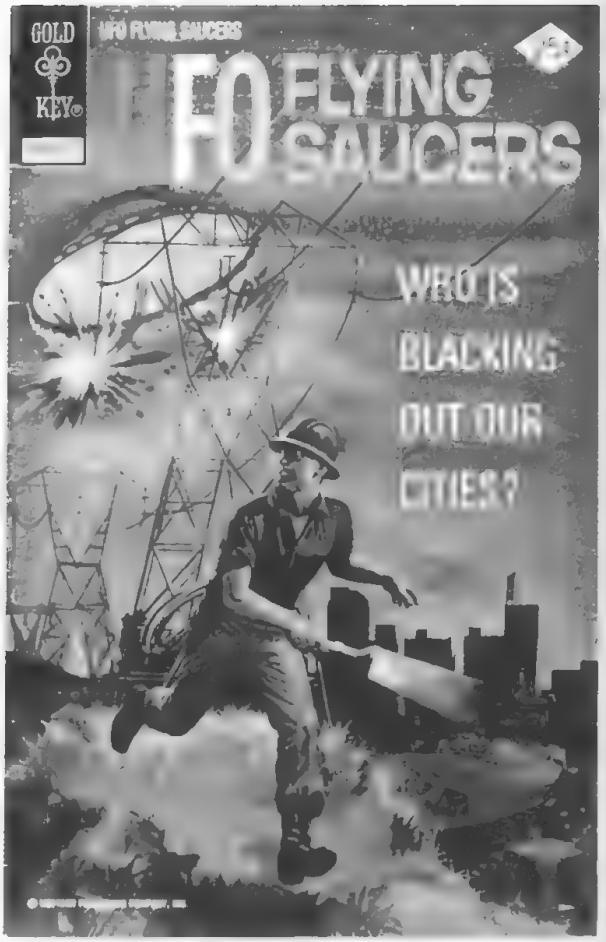
Thanks to the talents of Steve Ditko, Charlton had some unique strips as well. The splash page from one of them, "There's Hope In The Sky" (MYSTERIES OF UNEXPLORED WORLDS #22, January 1960) also appears on the opposite page. Ditko is primarily identified with Marvel Comics during this period, but he also did some fine work for Charlton at this time as well. The story involves a man who has a CE3K and proves it, by marrying her! It's fine Ditko and a fun story.

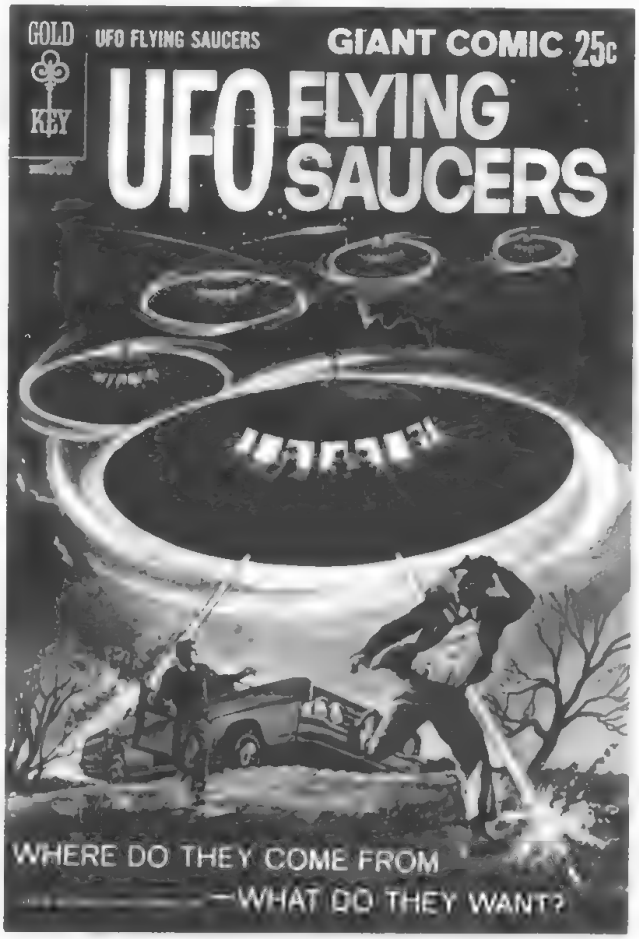
Going on to just the books featured in the cover gallery which follows, WEIRD SCIENCE #16 is a good example of an EC "kids" cover (which featured a group of children as a witness to some monstrous goings on), an approach which Neal Adams has used frequently on DC covers in the seventies. The WS #16 also features an excellent UFO story drawn by Wood called "Down To Earth" in which a scientist discerns that a rash of mysterious airplane crashes are caused by UFO's, but before he can present his evidence to the world, a UFO lands near his secluded home and the aliens (the same ones featured on the cover) murder the scientist and his wife. EC did many fine UFO tales, another classic one being "Snatched" from WEIRD SCIENCE #17.

So although EC seems to have done the most interesting things with the subject of UFO's, nearly all the comic companies have capitalized on this subject at one time or another. I think we can expect all of them to be doing it again, and very soon.

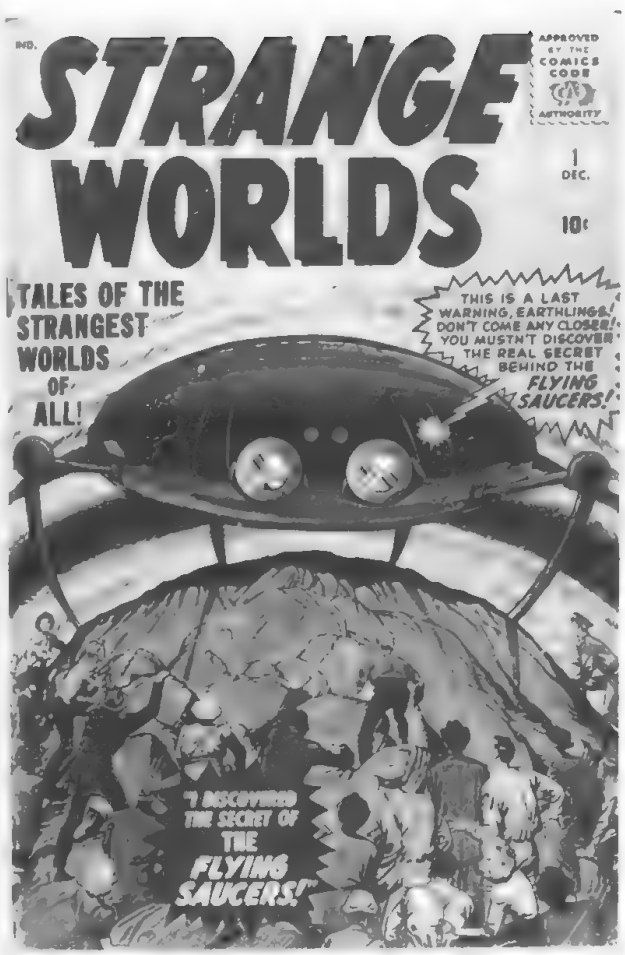
* * *


FLYING SAUCERS
10¢
No.1
What are they - Monsters or Benefactors from another planet? Only Professor Lanning knew!


GOLD KEY
UFO FLYING SAUCERS
UFO FLYING SAUCERS
WHO IS BLACKING OUT OUR CITIES?

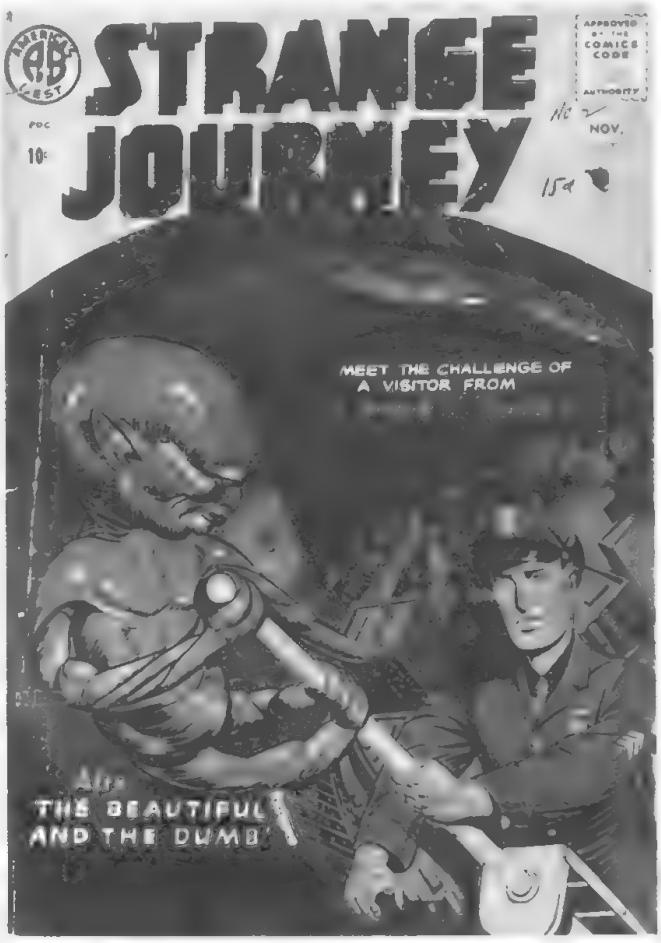

GOLD KEY
UFO FLYING SAUCERS
GIANT COMIC 25¢
UFO FLYING SAUCERS
WHERE DO THEY COME FROM
—WHAT DO THEY WANT?

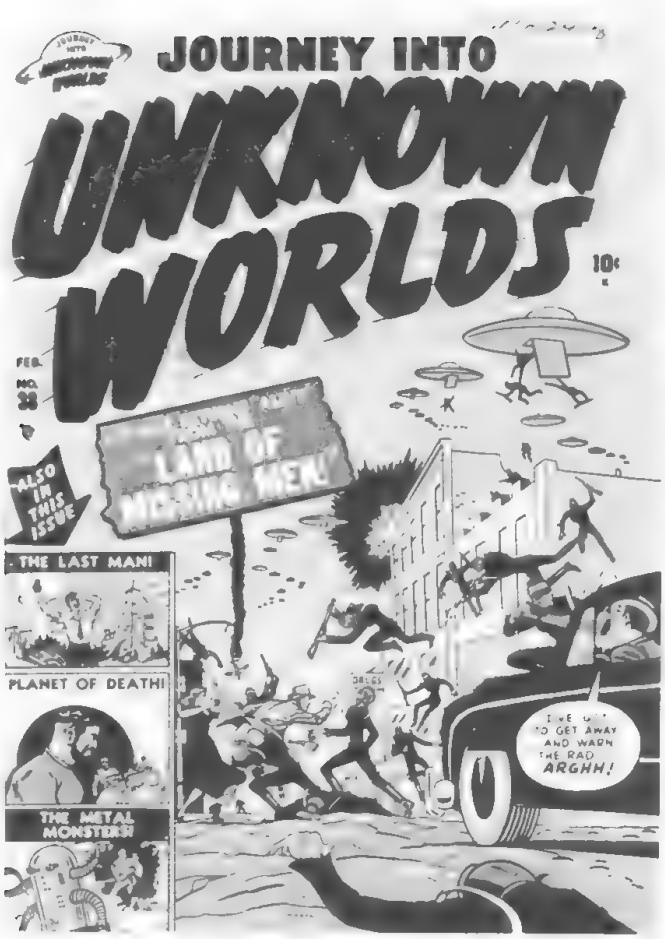
FLYING SAUCERS
COMICS
UNBELIEVABLE ACCOUNTS OF BIZARRE SIGHTINGS OF
UFO'S
AND THE
"MEN" WHO FLY THEM...
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

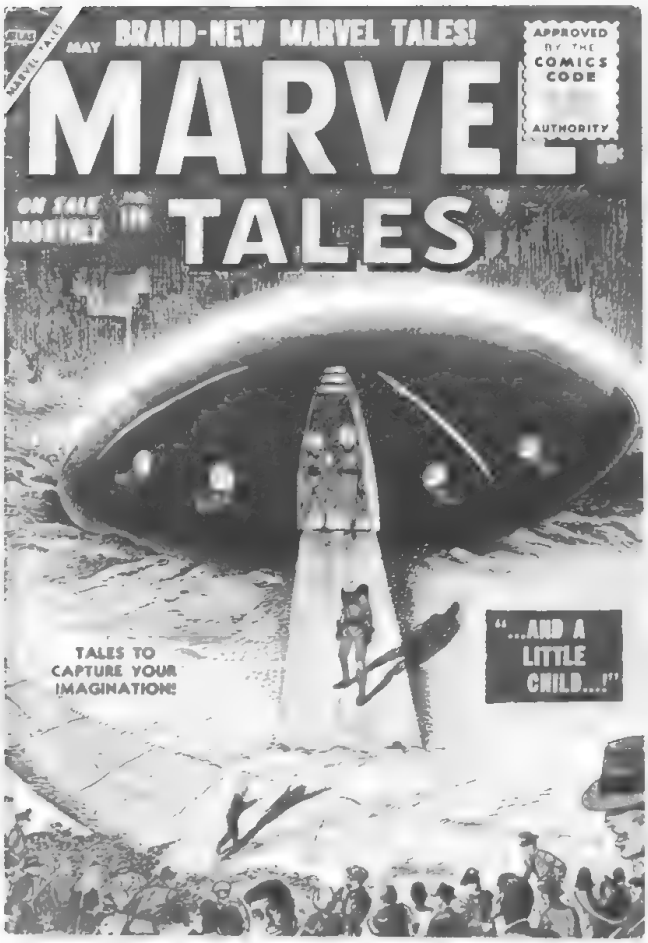

STRANGE WORLDS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
1 DEC.
10¢
TALES OF THE STRANGEST WORLDS OF ALL!
THIS IS A LAST WARNING, EARTHLINGS! DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! YOU MUSTN'T DISCOVER THE REAL SECRET BEHIND THE FLYING SAUCERS!
"I DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF THE FLYING SAUCERS!"

STRANGE ADVENTURES
JULY NO. 46
10¢
At Last!
THE MOST BAFFLING SECRET OF ALL TIME IS EXPOSED!
"I Flew a Flying Saucer!"

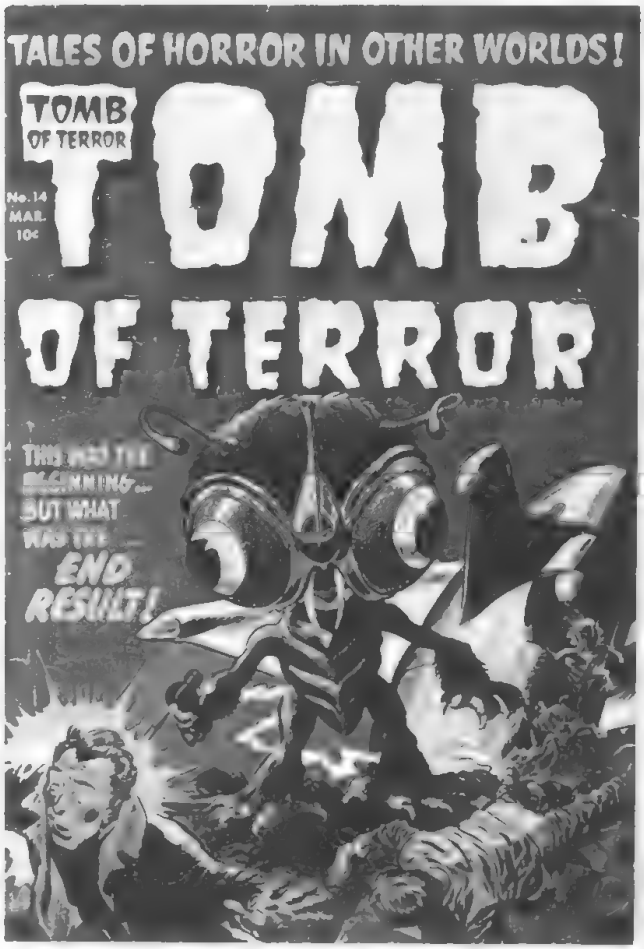
STRANGE TALES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE STRANGEST SCIENCE-FICTION YOU'VE EVER MARVELLED AT!
68 APR.
THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING... "EVACUATE EARTH!"

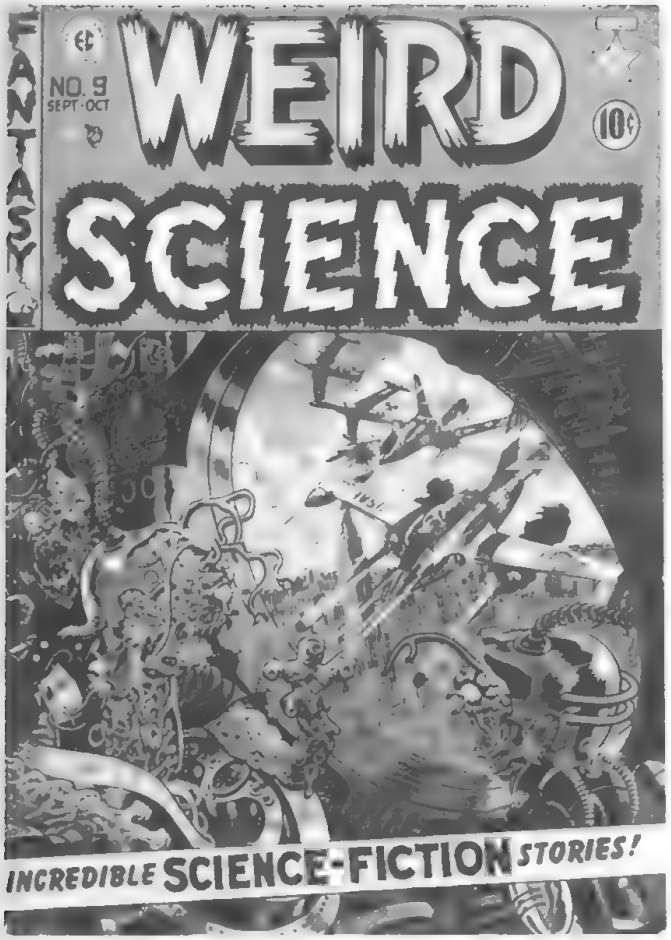

STRANGE JOURNEY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NOV.
10¢
MEET THE CHALLENGE OF A VISITOR FROM
THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE DUMB!

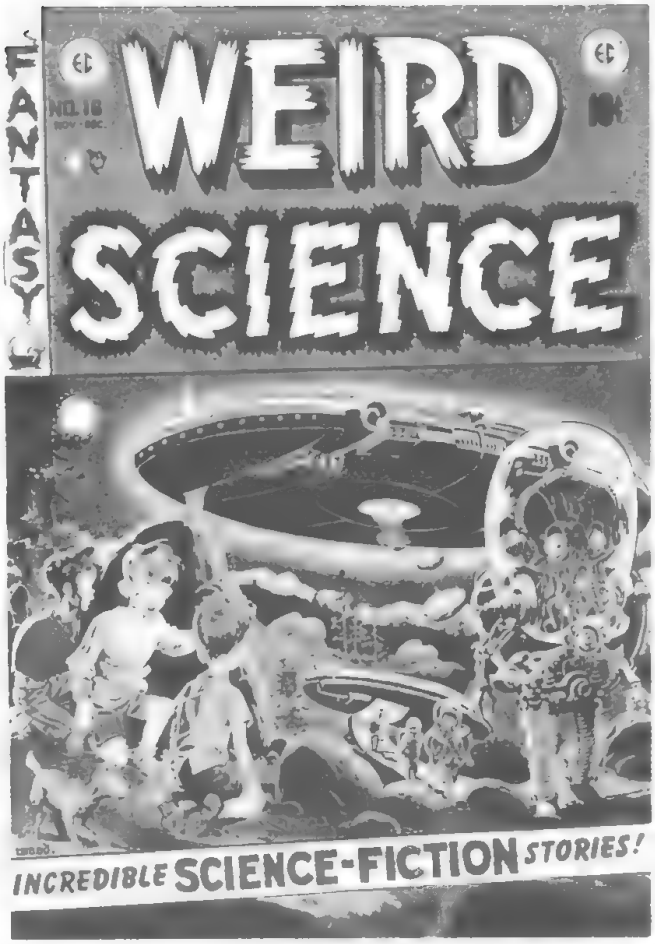

JOURNEY INTO
UNKNOWN WORLDS
10¢
FEB.
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
THE LAST MAN!
PLANET OF DEATH!
THE METAL MONSTERS!
LAND OF MISSING MEN!
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY AND WARN THE RAD ARGHH!

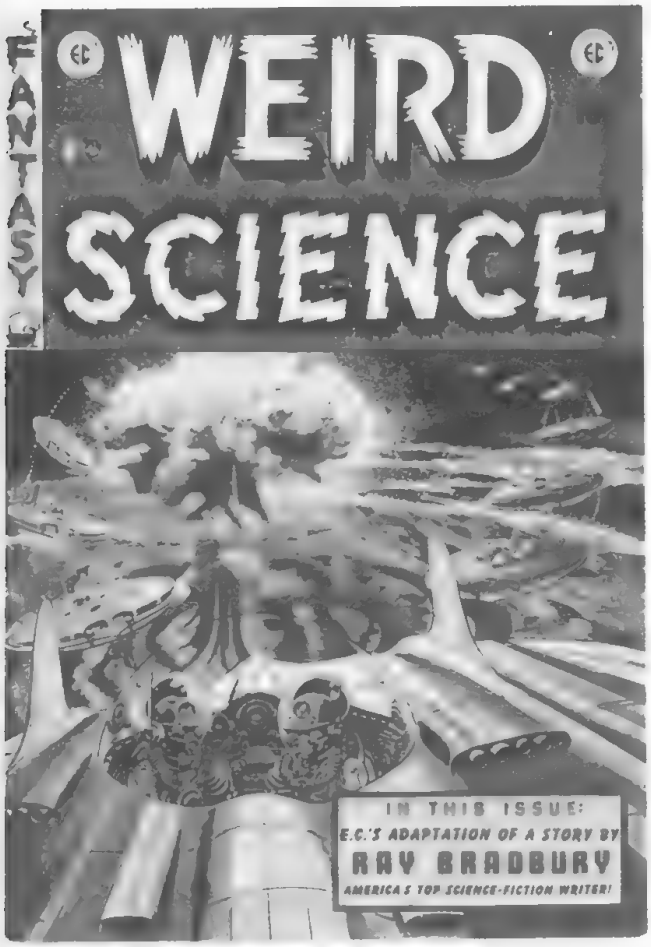

MAY
BRAND-NEW MARVEL TALES!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL
10¢
ON SALE MONTHLY
TALES
TALES TO CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION!
"...AND A LITTLE CHILD...!"

GOLD KEY
THE INVADERS
12
THE INVADERS
ON GUARD! THEY'RE HERE! ALIENS FROM A DYING PLANET PLOT OUR DESTRUCTION!
?


TALES OF HORROR IN OTHER WORLDS!
TOMB OF TERROR
No. 14
MAR.
10¢
TOMB OF TERROR
BUT WHAT
END RESULT!


FANTASY
NO. 9
SEPT-OCT
WEIRD
SCIENCE
10¢
INCREDIBLE SCIENCE-FICTION STORIES!


FANTASY
NO. 18
NOV-DEC.
WEIRD
SCIENCE
10¢
INCREDIBLE SCIENCE-FICTION STORIES!


FANTASY
WEIRD
SCIENCE
IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP SCIENCE-FICTION WRITER!

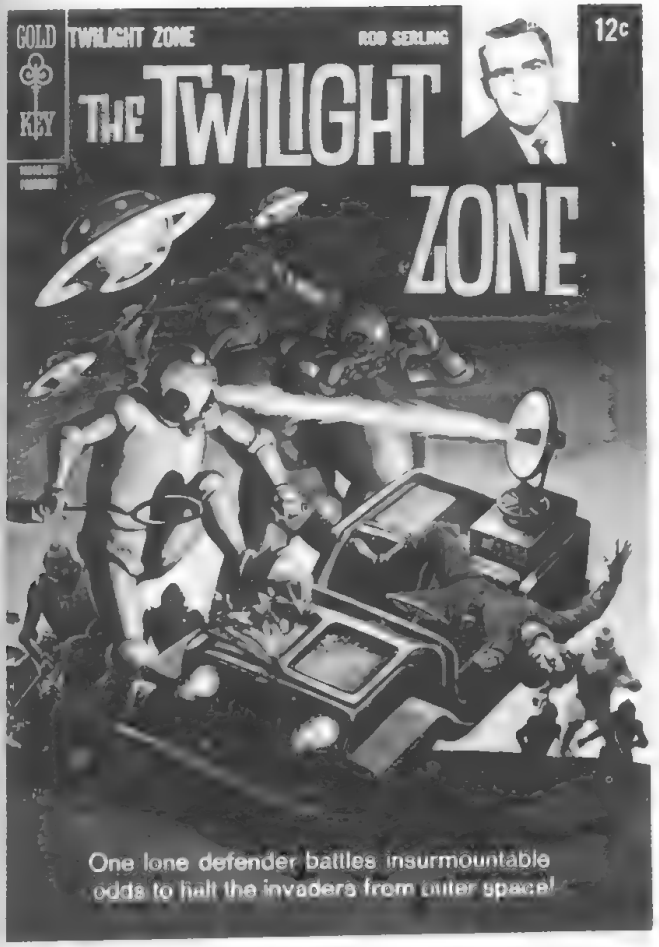
No. 26
DEC.
WEIRD
SCIENCE-FANTASY
10¢
SPECIAL ISSUE!
E.C. CHALLENGES THE U.S. AIR FORCE
WITH THIS ILLUSTRATED, FACTUAL
FLYING SAUCER REPORT
DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE!
NAMES · PLACES · DATES · QUOTES

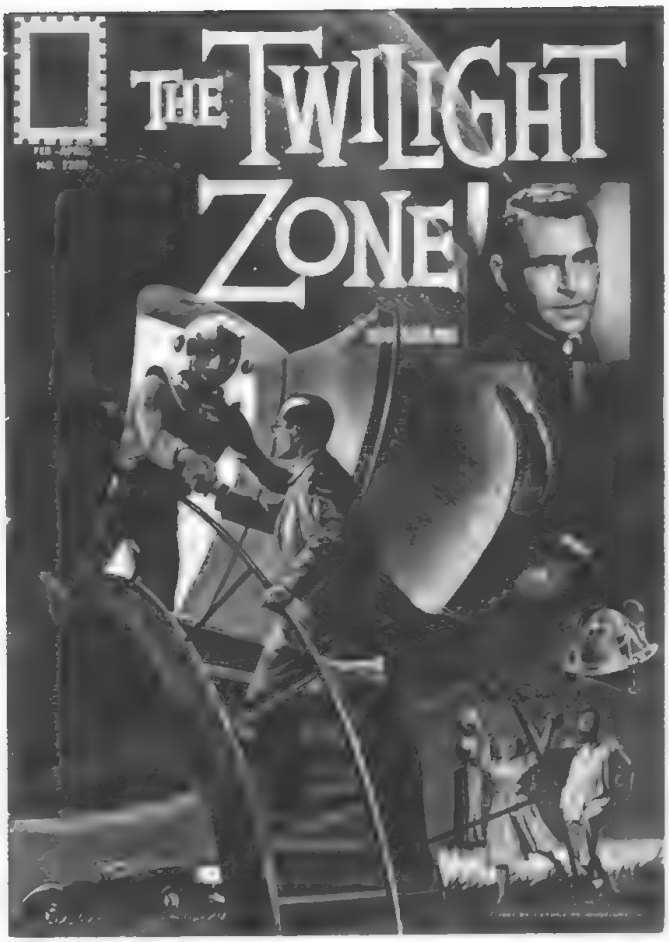
TALES TO
ASTONISH!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
2
MAR.
10¢
I KNEW IT! A FLYING SAUCER! THEY DO EXIST!! BUT WHAT CAN I DO NOW?!! WHAT CHANCE DO I HAVE AGAINST THAT?!
"MY JOB: CAPTURE A MARTIAN!"
I'M THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH WHO KNOWS WHAT LIES BELOW! BECAUSE
"I FELL TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH!"

SPACE
ADVENTURES
10¢
THE FIRST CONTACT WITH A FLYING SAUCER !!
READ "TWO WORLDS"
In this issue!

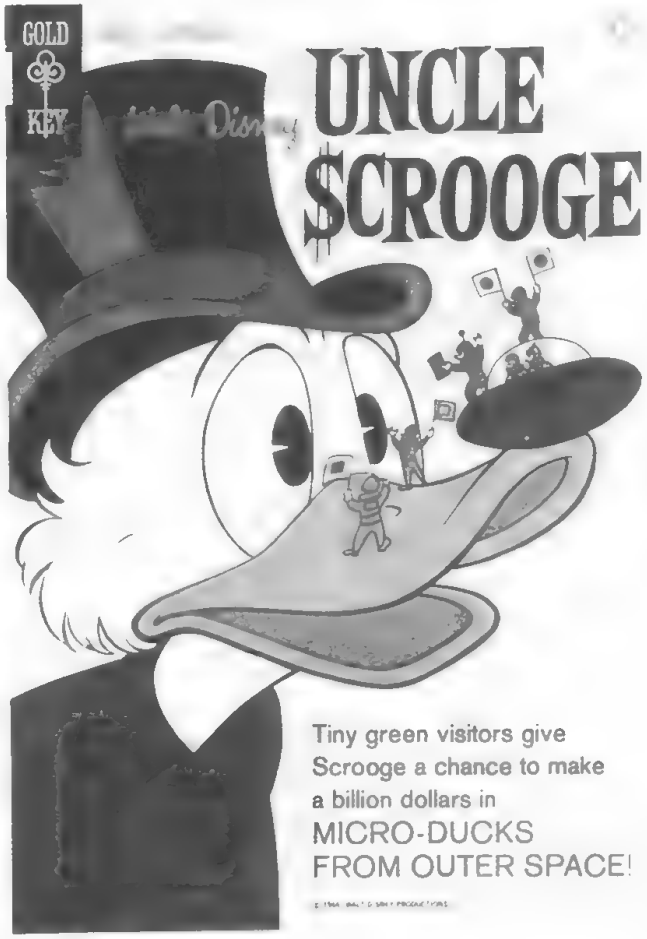
ATOMIC COMMANDOS IN ACTION!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NO 7- SEPT
Commander Battle
and the
ATOMIC SUB
10¢

A Fawcett Publication
FLYING SAUCER
10¢
REVEALED AT LAST!
THE MOST INCREDIBLE STORY OF MODERN TIMES!


GOLD KEY
TWILIGHT ZONE
ROD SERLING
12c
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
One lone defender battles insurmountable odds to halt the invaders from outer space!


THE TWILIGHT ZONE

GOLD KEY
TUROK SON OF STONE
INVASION OF LOST VALLEY
BY CREATURES ALIEN TO MAN AND BEAST!


GOLD KEY
Disney
UNCLE $CROOGE
Tiny green visitors give Scrooge a chance to make a billion dollars in
MICRO-DUCKS FROM OUTER SPACE!

Jempel 78
BATMAN

COMICS COMMENTARY

BY JAMES VAN HISE

There's an artist at work in the industry whose popularity is growing by leaps and bounds. The path of his career has taken him up through fandom, undergrounds and into the ranks of the professional newsstand publications. His work at Warren Publications has attracted a lot of attention, but it is in the pages of HEAVY METAL that the monthly exposure of his talent has exposed him to even more fans. Richard Corben's art has been a personal favorite of mine for nearly eight years. His work in HEAVY METAL shows how far he has come. He was always a master of color, but his style and his command of the anatomy have improved to such a degree that few artists can even hold a candle to him. He has steadfastly refused to work for the more conservative publishers whose books are subject to the Comics Code. It has already been a few years since he respectfully declined an offer by Joe Kubert to work at D.C. Corben refuses to be censored or restricted in his artwork in any way. And although he enjoyed the lack of restrictions during his tenure with the underground comics publishers, he wasn't given material such as that to do at Warren. HEAVY METAL once more features Corben unleashed.

The strip running in HEAVY METAL is a sequel to a prize-winning animated film Corben did in 1969-70 titled "Neverwhere".

It's interesting to see Corben's work in the early seventies as it was once difficult for him to draw a female who didn't look homely. He has improved considerably. The latest GASM features some of Corben's older strips and the strides he has taken from those to HEAVY METAL is nothing short of extraordinary.

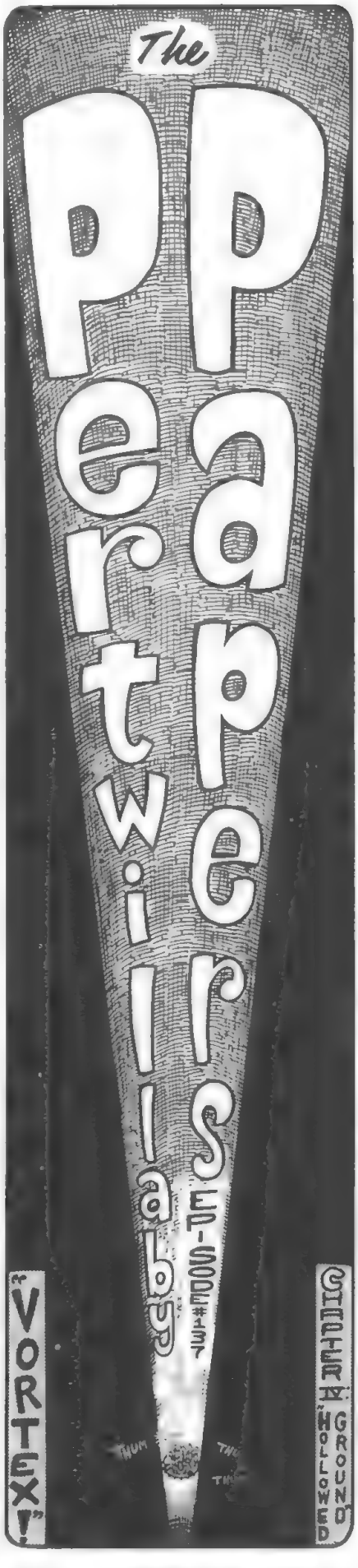
Corben is an artist such as is rarely seen in comics. His work is unique, fresh and exciting. He has surpassed the work of other artists who had previously been considered high watermarks in the realm of artistic achievement. He did not accomplish this just with a fine style. He did it because he possesses limitless talent and imagination. He has surpassed the finest work of many other artists, and he is still moving at a pace which is swiftly outdistancing them. It isn't often we're treated to a talent as seemingly limitless and explosive as Richard Corben's. The last time was with an artist by the name of Frank Frazetta, the man who is the most respected and admired artist in the world of fandom. Between Berni Wrightson and Richard Corben, fandom has birthed two magnificent talents whose abilities and imaginations may be compared with those of the man we all acknowledge as the master of the field.

SEEKER 3000 was a book we'd all been waiting to see and although it was very good, especially the splash page, Sutton's art seemed a bit loose in a lot of spots. His work on DR. STRANGE seems much closer to the mark. I'd never been that wild about Ernie Chan's inking before, but his work meshes with Sutton's in a way that is both wild, ethereal and magical. It rivals even the work done on the series by Frank Brunner, something I never thought I'd say about any artist's work on that title. Although a superhero guest starring in DR. STRANGE somehow seems out of place as a concept, Nighthawk fit in just right, and that Brunner cover was especially evocative.

It's kind of surprising to me to find that the comics of the sixties have become nostalgia. It's this sixties nostalgia that has produced SHOWCASE #101 through #103. Here we have Hawkman in his own strip again with Adam Strange as the guest star. The villains are all the classic villains of these two characters, especially the Shadow Thief. They even went so far as to have Murphy Anderson ink the book (his art is connected with some of the best stories in the two series). Having the cover drawn by Joe Kubert (the first artist on the Silver Age Hawkman) is the final tip of the hat to the sixties. Although the art on this issue by Al Milgrom is good, the inking by Anderson isn't as tight or refined as his work in the sixties. In the sixties, Anderson was the finest artist for inking Carmine Infantino and those comics which contained stories by them are still artistic feasts by anyone's standards, especially the Adam Strange stories. These characters most definitely deserve this revival, and I hope it succeeds in maintaining the care and interest that has gone into it thus far.

In another area of nostalgia, we have Carmine Infantino, one of the most popular artists of the sixties. Although he had been retired from drawing for over a decade, his return to comics is most welcome. I was looking at a recent cover of NOVA and wondering why it reminded me of a 1960's DC when I realized that it was because it was by Infantino. The flavor of the sixties DC's is still very much with him. The only criticism I might level against him is the same criticism I had of his work shortly before he left comics, that being that he had started drawing people as if they were all a bit overweight. His lines very loose and not as defined even under different inkers. Still it's enjoyable, much moreso than it was in those first few strips he did after he came out of artistic retirement. I read his DAREDEVIL's and I'm instantly reminded of his work on THE FLASH. It's still fun to read even if some of his positions seem awkward now and then. His work on JOHN CARTER will apparently be shortlived since he hates barbarian-type strips. Since Nebres did such an excellent job inking #12, the only complaint I could register is that Tars Tarkas was about half the height he should be in relation to John Carter. It's curious that Infantino should turn up on that title for I said a few issues back that the art of Kane & Nebres on #2 carried much the same atmosphere as the sixties Adam Strange work of Infantino and Anderson.

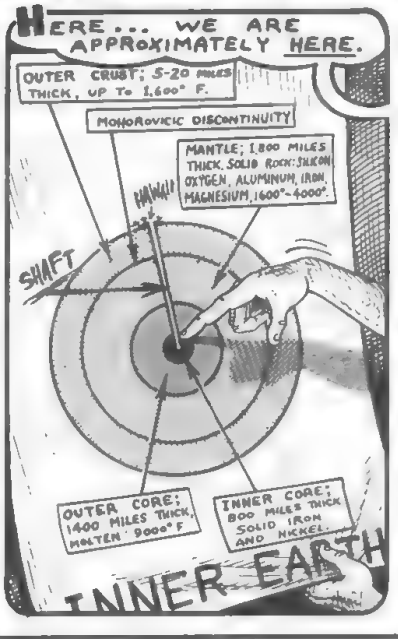
I'll end this column on a happy note by saying that it looks like quality in comics is on the upswing again.


The
Paperwierd
EPISODE #137
"VORTEX!"
GILBERT HOLLOWED GROUND

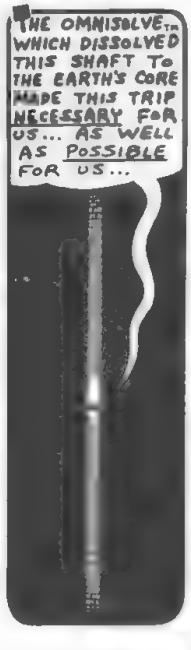
THUM!
THUM!
THUM!

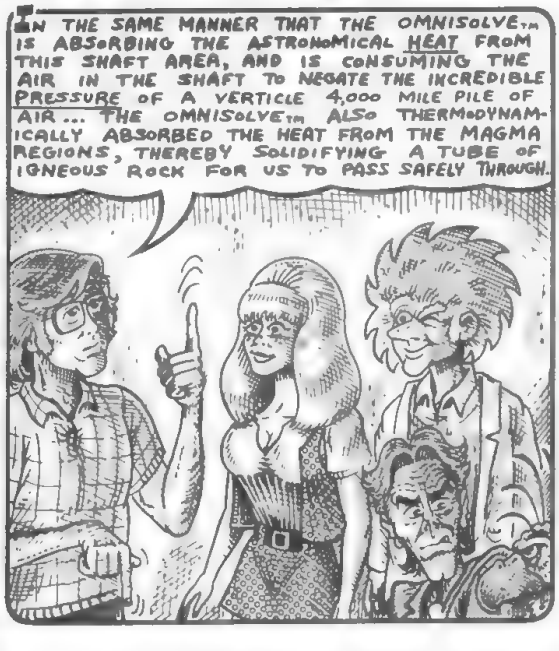
THUM THUM THUM
THUM THUM THUM
THUM THUM THUM

THE AREA AROUND THE SHAFT IS AGAIN COMPLETELY SOLID...


HERE... WE ARE APPROXIMATELY HERE.
OUTER CRUST; 5-20 MILES THICK, UP TO 1,600° F.
MOHOROVICIC DISCONTINUITY
MANTLE; 1,800 MILES THICK. SOLID ROCK: SILICON OXYGEN, ALUMINUM, IRON, MAGNESIUM, 1600°-4000°.
HAHAH!
SHAFT
OUTER CORE; 1400 MILES THICK, MOLTEN 9000° F
INNER CORE; 800 MILES THICK SOLID IRON AND NICKEL.
INNER EARTH

VELL, DOT VOULD MEAN VE HAFF ALREADY PASSED T'ROUGH DER "OUTER KORE"... DER MOLTEN REGION YOU VERE SO FEARFUL UF. HOW'D VE DO DOT?!


THE OMNISOLVE™ WHICH DISSOLVED THIS SHAFT TO THE EARTH'S CORE MADE THIS TRIP NECESSARY FOR US... AS WELL AS POSSIBLE FOR US...


IN THE SAME MANNER THAT THE OMNISOLVE™ IS ABSORBING THE ASTRONOMICAL HEAT FROM THIS SHAFT AREA, AND IS CONSUMING THE AIR IN THE SHAFT TO NEGATE THE INCREDIBLE PRESSURE OF A VERTICLE 4,000 MILE PILE OF AIR... THE OMNISOLVE™ ALSO THERMODYNAMICALLY ABSORBED THE HEAT FROM THE MAGMA REGIONS, THEREBY SOLIDIFYING A TUBE OF IGNEOUS ROCK FOR US TO PASS SAFELY THROUGH.

WE ARE NOW ON THE FINAL LEG OF OUR...JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH--SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE DENSE "INNER CORE." WE SHOULD REACH THE BLACK HOLE WITHIN HOURS.
Zip
CLICK
1

PERTWILLABY, I'VE YET TO HAVE SOMEBODY EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT THIS "BLACK HOLE" IS, OR WHY WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE IT WHERE IT IS AND GO BACK HOME!

SQUORK!

OH, SHUT UP!

WELL, THE BLACK HOLE IS A COLLAPSED NEUTRON STAR; A POINT OF INFINITE DENSITY WHICH CAN CRUSH ANYTHING WITHIN ITS "EVENT HORIZON" LITERALLY OUT OF EXISTANCE. WE MANAGED TO CAPTURE THE COLLAPSAR AS IT PASSED NEAR THE EARTH, AND PROF. PHOEBUS SUCCEEDED IN USING IT TO DISTILL OMNISOLVE™, THE UNIVERSAL SOLVENT. HOWEVER, IN A RATHER UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT, SOME OMNISOLVE™ WAS UNLEASHED, AND ATE THIS SHAFT TO THE EARTH'S CORE CARRYING THE BLACK HOLE WITH IT. ONCE IT REACHES THE CORE, THE OMNISOLVE™ WILL INEVITABLEY FALL INTO THE HOLE... AND THE CONFLICT OF THESE TWO OMNIPOTENT POWERS WILL, I THEORIZE, REND THE FABRIC OF OUR UNIVERSE.

DO TELL.

YES... THAT IS WHY WE MUST RETRIEVE THE BLACK HOLE. I BELIEVE THAT THE EVENT HORIZON OR "SPHERE OF INFLUENCE" OF THE HOLE MIGHT BEGIN TO EXPAND. AS A RESULT, THIS ENTIRE PLANET WILL BE EVENTUALLY HOLLOWED OUT, AND ULTIMATELY CONSUMED ENTIRELY... IF THE GRAVITATIONAL PULLS OF THE MOON AND SUN DON'T FIRST POP IT LIKE A COSMIC SOAP BUBBLE.

GRACIOUS... THAT SOUNDS SIMPLY AWFUL!

AND NOT A BITTLE LIT.

SIR, DO YOU KNOW YOUR GODDAMN DODO IS CHEWING ON MY IMPORTED ITALIAN SHOES?!

NÅY... BUT IF YE A FEW BARS HUM...

SAURBRÄTEN! VITH MINE VEAPONRY LOST, I HAFF NO SAFE VAY TO FORCE DIS DUMKOPH VENTURE TO TURN BACK. I HAFF MINE SKRAPBOOK VHICH IS VHY I EVER KAME DOWN DIS VERDAMDT HOLE... BUT IT VON'T BE VORTH MUCH IFF I DON'T GET OUTTEN DIS PIT.

GÅDZÖÖKS! THESE BRITONS ÅRE CRÅZY! I SPEÅK KING HENRYE'S ENGLISH MÖST GÖÖDE... YET STILL I UNDERSTÅND NÖT VHAT SÅYS THIS FELLÖW VITH THE LITTLE WINDÖWS ÖN HIS FÅCE.

ODOO HO! MINE ICELANDIC FREUND! I VILL TELL YOU UF VHAT HE SPEAKS! DIS BRITISH UPSTART SAYS DAT HE VILL CHEAT YOU, DER VORLD-RENOWN EXPLORER ÅRNE SUKNÆGGSEMM, OUT UF BEING DER FIRST TO REACH DER EARTH'S KORE... DER GOAL FOR VHICH YOU HAFF SEARCHED DESE 440 YEARS!

THE VERYE DEVIL YE SÅY!

DER DEFFIL I DO SAY! HAFF YOU NEFER HEARD UF NORDIC SUPREMACY?! ARE YOU, A SUPERIOR NORSEMAN, A DESCEDANT UF THOR HIMSELF, GOING TO ALLOW DIS MERE BRITON TO ROB YOU UF DER GLORY YOU DESERVE? ...ARE YOU GOING TO ALLOW HIM TO STEAL DER REPUTATION AS HISTORY'S GREATEST EXPLORER, AN HONOR FOR VHICH YOU HAFF STRIVEN FOR OVER FOUR CENTURIES?!

AM I?

NEIN! NEIN!

NINÉ?! BY ÖDIN, SAY I NÖT EVEN ÖNCE! I VILL BE ROBBED NÖT ÖF THIS GLORY!!

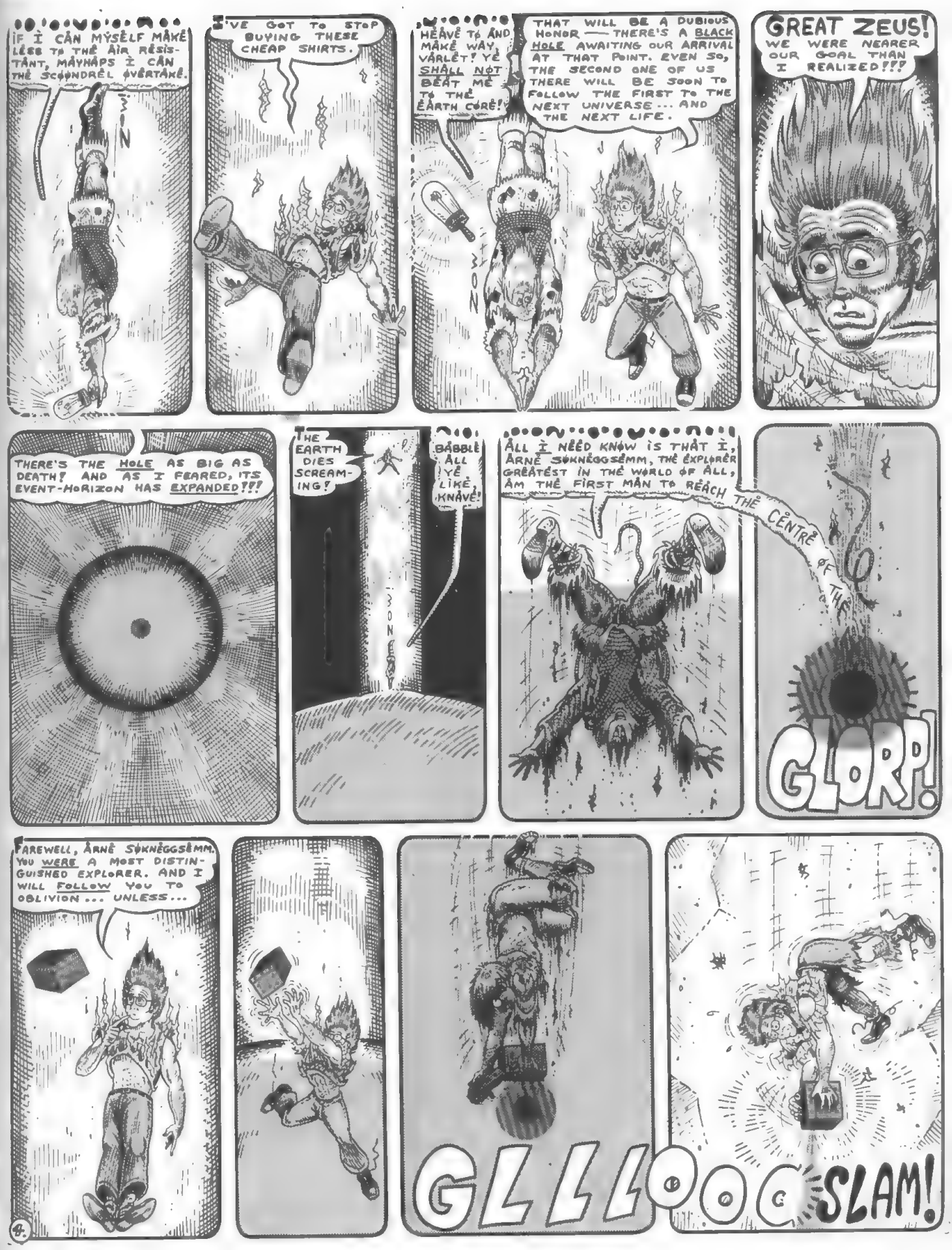
I SÅY, YE BLÅCKGUÅRD! YE LÖNDÖN CITY SLICKER! THINK YE THÅT I BE THE HILL ÖVER SIMPLY BECAUSE I BE 482 ÖLDE ÖF YEARS?! YE THINK I SÖ ÄDDLED BE TÖ LET YÖÜ MY PLÅCE IN HISTORY STEÅL!

HAH?

ÖN YÖÜR GUÅRD! I SHÅLL YÖÜR LITTLE WINDÖWS BREÅK!

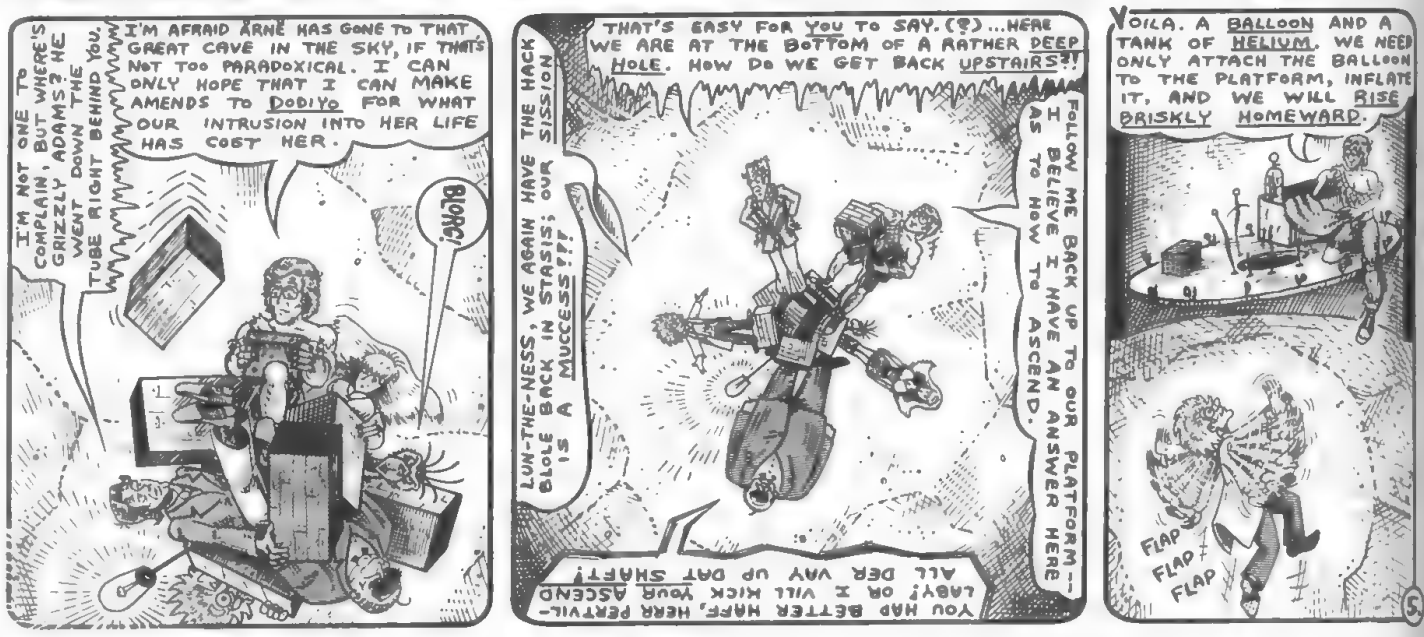
WOP!

LANCEY, OUR LUCK WITH "NATIVE GUIDES" IS GETTING AS SORRY AS OUR LUCK WITH AIR TRANSPORTATION.
MR. SUKNEGGSEMM, IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO EXPRESS A DESIRE TO "LAUGH" WITH FEATHER HERE ... I ASSURE YOU, THERE'S GOING TO BE BIG TROUBLE!
SHAFT
I WISH ONLY TO LAUGH AT YOUR ATTEMPT TO ROB ME OF BEING THE FIRST MAN TO REACH THE EARTH CENTRE! YE HAVE ALREADY TROUBLE BIG!
SIR, THERE'S BEEN SOME SERIOUS MISUNDERSTANDING.
DON'T HURT HIM, LANCEY. HE'S AN OLD MAN.
WASTE HIM, PERTWILLABY! I'LL TAKE OUT HIS GODDAM DODO!
QUONK!
WUMP
REALLY, HERR PERTVILLABY... YOU KONTRIBUTE LITTLE TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BY KROSSING OUR NORDIC FREUND. IT IS, HOW YOU SAY... TACKY.
YAWN
WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE.
TO YOUR DEATH FALL, INTERLOPER!
GUT FORM. QVITE ADEQUATE.
CRASH!
GREAT HONK!
LET GO OF THE RAILING, LOUT, OR I SHALL WITH THIS BOX BEAN YOU.
THOT NAT! THAT'S MY ATOM-CHARGED HACK BLOLE RECEPTACLE! NEE WEED IT TO RECAPTURE THE HOLE!
BONK
BYE THE GODS! IN ASGAARD! WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU CAME TO YOUR SENSES! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING?!
MOSTE QUITE! IVE JUST GUARANTEED THAT THE ONE WITH THE WINDOWED FACE WILL BEAT ME TO THE EARTH CORE! UNLESS I, FAST ACT!
GRR
3


IF I CAN MYSELF MAKE LESS TO THE AIR RESISTANT, MAYHAPS I CAN THE SCOUNDREL OVERTAKE.
I'VE GOT TO STOP BUYING THESE CHEAP SHIRTS.
HEAVE TO AND MAKE WAY, VARLET! YE SHALL NOT BEAT ME TO THE EARTH CORE!
THAT WILL BE A DUBIOUS HONOR — THERE'S A BLACK HOLE AWAITING OUR ARRIVAL AT THAT POINT. EVEN SO, THE SECOND ONE OF US THERE WILL BE SOON TO FOLLOW THE FIRST TO THE NEXT UNIVERSE... AND THE NEXT LIFE.
GREAT ZEUS! WE WERE NEARER OUR GOAL THAN I REALIZED!!!
THERE'S THE HOLE AS BIG AS DEATH! AND AS I FEARED, ITS EVENT-HORIZON HAS EXPANDED!!!
THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING!
BABBLE ALL YE LIKE, KNAVE!
ALL I NEED KNOW IS THAT I, ARNE SOKNEGGSEMM, THE EXPLORER GREATEST IN THE WORLD OF ALL, AM THE FIRST MAN TO REACH THE CENTRE OF THE
GLORP!
FAREWELL, ARNE SOKNEGGSEMM. YOU WERE A MOST DISTINGUISHED EXPLORER. AND I WILL FOLLOW YOU TO OBLIVION... UNLESS...
GLLLOOG
SLAM!

I'VE DONE IT? I'VE RECAPTURED THE BLACK STAR!
THE PLANET IS SECURE! LIFE WILL GO ON!
SOL WILL CONTINUE TO SHINE ON THIS BLUE-GREEN JEWEL!
MY WORD... WHAT A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE
HOLY MUD! NOW WHAT?!
VE ARE NEARLY VEIGHTLESS! VAS IST LOS?!
GWAWK!
OH MY!

SOMETHING — I KNON'T DOE WHAT — HAS HAPPENED TO THE HACK BLOLE BELOW US THAT WAS CAUSING THE "ARTIFICIAL" GRAVITY IN WHICH WE'VE DEN BESCENDING. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE TEEPER ONE DRAVELS INTO THE PLANET, THE LIGHTER HE BECOMES AS THE MASS OF EARTH ABOVE HIM GROWS GREATER THAN THE MASS BELOW HIM. WE MUST BE NERY VEAR THE CENTER NOW!
CUT I BAN'T UNDER-STAND WHAT—
LOOK! THERE'S A LARGE CAVERN BELOW US — AND THERE'S LANCEY!
PISTER MERTWIL-ABY! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
WELL, THROUGH A STROKE OF LUCK, I MANAGED TO SNARE THE HOLE IN OUR CHARGED RECEPTACLE WHICH I HAPPENED TO HAVE ON ME AT THE MOMENT.
I'M GLAD THAT I'D ALREADY DRILLED SOME TINY AIR HOLES IN THE BOX TO ALLOW THE COLLAPSAR TO CONTINUE TO SIPHON THE ATMOSPHERE. OTHERWISE THE FULL PRESSURE OF THIS 4000 MILE TALL SHAFT OF AIR WOULD HAVE RENDERED US ALL NEAR TO TWO-DIMENSIONAL.
GOSH. I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE LIKED THAT.


I'M NOT ONE TO COMPLAIN, BUT WHERE'S GRIZZLY ADAMS? HE WENT DOWN THE TUBE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
I'M AFRAID ARNE HAS GONE TO THAT GREAT CAVE IN THE SKY, IF THAT'S NOT TOO PARADOXICAL. I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT I CAN MAKE AMENDS TO DODIYO FOR WHAT OUR INTRUSION INTO HER LIFE HAS COST HER.
BLOMP!
LUN-THE-NESS, WE AGAIN HAVE THE HACK BLOLE BACK IN STASIS; OUR SISSION IS A MUCCESS!!!
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY. (?)...HERE WE ARE AT THE BOTTOM OF A RATHER DEEP HOLE. HOW DO WE GET BACK UPSTAIRS?!
FOLLOW ME BACK UP TO OUR PLATFORM — I BELIEVE I HAVE AN ANSWER HERE AS TO HOW TO ASCEND.
YOU HAP BETTER NAFF, HERR PERTWIL-LABY? OR I VILL KICK YOUR ASCEND ALL DER VAY UP DAT SHAFT!
VOILA. A BALLOON AND A TANK OF HELIUM. WE NEED ONLY ATTACH THE BALLOON TO THE PLATFORM, INFLATE IT, AND WE WILL RISE BRISKLY HOMEWARD.
FLAP FLAP FLAP
5

With careful manipulation of the rollers, we can rise even faster than we descended, and be back in Hawaii, safe and sound, within 4 days!

Alright, pertvillaby... ve haff all der profisions back on board. Blow dat t'ing up, und let's go!

Very well, then. up, up and away!

FOOMP!

Zip

I don't mind telling you, it was touch & go there for a nanosecond. As I'd feared, the Omnisolve™ falling into the black hole caused the event-horizon to begin expanding. Black holes normally inhale matter and release it as energy through quasars in the antimatter universe. But I suspect that we now have the doorway to a pulsar here... A quasar which emits its energy in timed pulses. With each pulse of the antimatter pulsar, our black star's event-horizon is expanding on the basis of an exponential function*.

*-(I wish I knew how Lance figured all that out!)

With its first pulse it must have doubled in size -- with its second, it quadrupled -- its next pulse will increase it in size something like 8 times. Soon our entire solar system would have been in peril as each pulse swelled the horizon by the nth power. Thank gosh that the pulses are some hours apart & we reached it in time. The charged receptacle will prevent the black hole from growing as long as it is contained therein.

YAWN

This adventure is over! We have only a leisurely ride to the surface yet to complete.

Heh. Ha ha. Ho ho ho. Seeing as this is only the 4th of 5 chapters, that seems doubtful. Look on, gentle reader, as our space/time continuum shifts ahead several days and several thousand miles.

SIZZLE

SIZZLE

SIZZLE

Lancey... Lancey... I can't take it much longer --- it's... it's so hot!

Try to bear up, feather. As I've explained, the internal pressures and radiations of the earth are reheating the shaft area which the Omnisolve™ cooled. Just last a bit longer and we'll be out of here.

But I've even lost track of how near we must be to the surface. The mechanisms of all my equipment have melted and fused.

Faugh! Dis kould almost make dose people ve sent to der furnaces seem lucky by komparison!

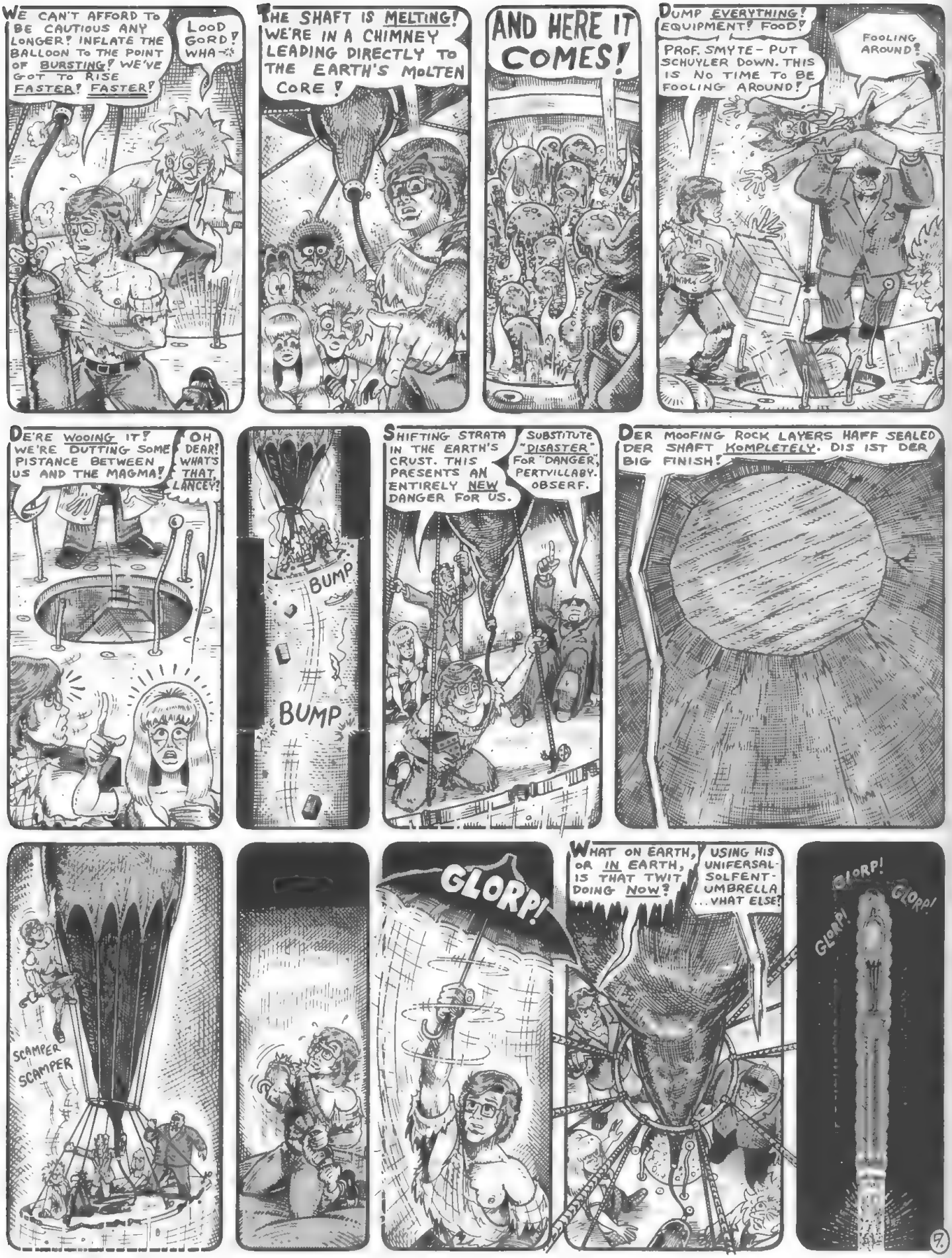
Dear God! The worst has happened! My money clip has melted!

Well, heh heh, maybe not.

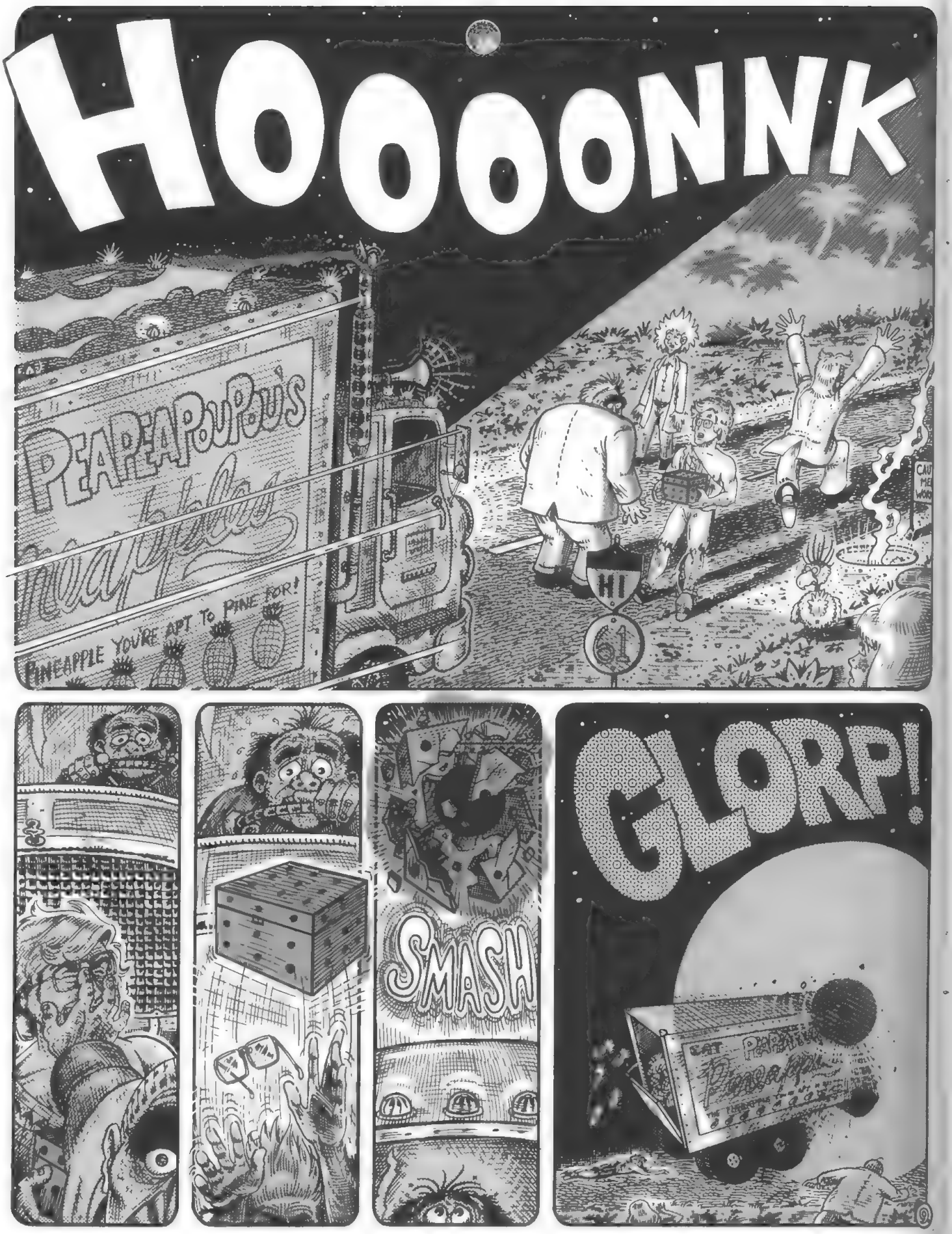
I'm afraid that the truly worst is about to happen! I expected this! Quickly -- jetison everything?!?

What are you now babbling about, schnitzel-breath?

6.


WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE CAUTIOUS ANY LONGER! INFLATE THE BALLOON TO THE POINT OF BURSTING! WE'VE GOT TO RISE FASTER! FASTER!
LOOD GORD! WHA-?
THE SHAFT IS MELTING! WE'RE IN A CHIMNEY LEADING DIRECTLY TO THE EARTH'S MOLTEN CORE!
AND HERE IT COMES!
DUMP EVERYTHING! EQUIPMENT! FOOD!
PROF. SMYTE - PUT SCHUYLER DOWN. THIS IS NO TIME TO BE FOOLING AROUND!
FOOLING AROUND!
DE'RE WOOING IT! WE'RE DUTTING SOME PISTANCE BETWEEN US AND THE MAGMA!
OH DEAR! WHAT'S THAT, LANCEY?
BUMP
BUMP
SHIFTING STRATA IN THE EARTH'S CRUST. THIS PRESENTS AN ENTIRELY NEW DANGER FOR US.
SUBSTITUTE "DISASTER" FOR "DANGER", PERTVILLABY. OBSERF.
DER MOOFING ROCK LAYERS HAFF SEALED DER SHAFT KOMPLETELY. DIS IST DER BIG FINISH!
SCAMPER SCAMPER
GLORP!
WHAT ON EARTH, OR IN EARTH, IS THAT TWIT DOING NOW?
USING HIS UNIFERSAL-SOLFENT-UMBRELLA ...VHAT ELSE?
GLORP!
GLORP!
GLORP!
7

CRUMBLE!
LANCEY! LOOK OUT!
WONK
OH, DRAT!
DRAT!
CLOCCCKRP!
I'M AFRAID THAT THIS IS AS FAR AS WE GO, FRIENDS.
OOOOOOH.. SHOOT!
LANCEY, LOOK! YOU CUT THROUGH A CAVE DOWN HERE!
THAT WILL BE OUR RESCAPE OOTE!
DER LAVA VILL KATCH US IN NO TIME. VHY DON'T VE STAND UND FACE DEATH LIKE MEN!
HURRY, LANCEY!
GRUNK!
SPLOSH
BLAM!
SPLOSH
SEE! I TOLD YOU. VE HAFF ALREADY KOME TO A DEAD END.
NO— SEE? THERE'S AN OPENING IN THE ROOF!
QUICKLY! EVERYBODY UP! WE ARE NOT LOST YET!
VE SEEM TO BE IN A VAST KAVERN. DER AIR IST KOOL UND DAMP.
AND WE'VE LOST ALL OUR LAMPS! HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO GO ON WITHOUT ANY SORT OF LIGHT, PERTWILLABY?
A LEGITIMATE QUERY, SCHUYLER. I —
LANCEY! LOOK UP. THERE'S A LIGHT!
!!! THAT... WHY, THAT'S THE MOO—!
YAAAAAA
7.
8.


HOOOONNK
PEAPEAPUPU'S
PINEAPPLE YOU'RE APT TO PINE FOR!
HI
SMASH
GLORP!

LANCEY! SPEAK TO ME! ARE YOU ALL SQUASHED?
THANKS TO A HIGH UNDER-CARRAIGE CLEARANCE AND A WIDE WHEEL-BASE, I ENDURE. BUT THAT'S THE LEAST OF MY WORRIES NOW!
PROF. PHOEBUS! WE MUST GET TO YOUR OBSERVATORY RIGHT AWAY AND USE YOUR ATOM-CHARGER TO CHARGE UP ANOTHER RECEPTACLE TO HOLD THAT BLACK HOLE! AND QUICKLY—BEFORE THAT COLLAPSAR-PULSAR HAS A CHANCE TO PULSE AND EXPAND AGAIN!
RIGHT! MY OBSERVATORY ON MT. KONAHUANUI IS THUST JERE, WHERE THE SHAFT WOULD HAVE EMERGED HAD IT NOT BLEN BOCKED.
BUT... WHAT COULD BE GOING ON THERE SO NATE AT LIGHT? IT'S LIT UP LIKE A —☼
RUMBLE
GURGLE!
LIKE A VOLCANO, WHICH IS JUST WHAT THE SHAFT, ALBEIT PLUGGED, HAS TURNED MT. KONAHUANUI INTO. YOUR ATOM-CHARGER IS GONE!
PROFESSOR— IS THERE ANOTHER CHARGER AT THE UNIVERSITY'S MAIN OBSERVATORY ON MAUNA KEA ON HAWAII ISLAND?
OF NOURSE COT. MY CHARGER WAS A PROTOTYPE FROM MY OWN EXPERIMENTS. CONDUCTED AT THE OAHU EXPERIMENTAL-STATION OBSERVATORY. IT WAS THE WONLY UN IN EXISTANCE!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY, LANCEY?
I... I WISH I KNEW WHAT TO SAY. THERE'S SIMPLY... NOTHING... NOT ONE THING I CAN SUGGEST AS A SOLUTION! WITH EACH PULSE THAT BLACK HOLE WILL EXPAND UNTIL... ..... THE SOLE COURSE OF ACTION AT HAND IS...
EVACUATE HAWAII!
AND THEN WHAT, PERTWILLABY?
WE'LL... CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN WE COME TO IT. I GUESS
THERE ISN'T A MOMENT TO LOSE! I MUST GET IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNOR RIGHT AWAY!
YOU MEAN RICHARD DENNING?
ACH. IFF IT IST NOT VUN T'ING, IT IST ANNUDDER.

NEXT ISSUE:

THE MOST MIND-BOGGLING EVENT ON THE BLOCK!

THE ~~EX~~IM~~EX~~PLOSIVE CONCLUSION TO "VORTEX!"

AS JACK LORD SEZ: "BE THERE. ALOHA".

● IN THE MEANTIME, A SIDENOTE: THIS STORY IS ENTITLED "VORTEX!", RIGHT? AND THAT ONE ABOUT THE INCAN TREASURE WAS "LOST IN THE ANDES". WELL, Y'KNOW THAT LAST ONE WITH ALL THE RUNNING AROUND UP AT THE NORTH POLE? THAT ONE WAS ENTITLED:

"SUB-ZERO"

DOUBLE-ENTENDRE, GET IT? HEH. IT IS TO LAUGH. AND THE WHOLE BUNCH OF 'EM WERE AND AM...

by Don Rosa

FOR THOSE WHO WONDERED HOW MUCH OF THE CHANGE IN STAFF ON THE "STAR WARS" COMIC WAS BECAUSE ROY THOMAS & HOWARD CHAYKIN WANTED TO DO "OTHER THINGS" AND HOW MUCH WAS BECAUSE THE STAR WARS CORPORATION WAS DISSATISFIED AND WAS RESPONDING TO THE CRITICISM THE COMIC HAD RECEIVED, I THINK THAT THIS LETTER I RECEIVED ALONG WITH SAMPLE COPIES OF STAR WARS #11 WILL ANSWER THAT. THE ONLY OTHER TIME THE SW CORP SENT OUT SAMPLES OF THE STAR WARS COMIC WAS WHEN IT WAS FIRST RELEASED NEARLY A YEAR AGO!

James Van Hise
RBCC
9025 SW 48th Terrace
Miami, FL 33165

8 February 1978

Dear Friends:

As you have no doubt already noticed, we've included a couple copies of the new issue of the STAR WARS comic book (No. 11), published by Marvel Comics Group. Take a look at it. We're pleased to show you the new direction of the book, which features the writing/editing talents of Archie Goodwin and the beautiful artwork of Carmine Infantino and Terry Austin. We think you'll agree with us that the book is now on the right track.

We're proud of STAR WARS No. 11, and think it merits a special look. We at the STAR WARS CORP. are interested in your reactions to the book, and look forward to getting your response.

And thanks for everything you've done for STAR WARS in the last year.

May the Force be with you,

Charles Lippincott Mick Garris

Charles Lippincott Mick Garris
STAR WARS CORPORATION

The Star Wars Corporation, P.O. Box 8669, Universal City, California 91608, Telephone 213—985-4321, Ext. 1823

Last issue I promised that this time the IC would be more balanced. Well...I'd fully intended that it would be but with ten pages of PP to do I just didn't have the time to arrange some comic oriented questions and just had to make do with a bunch of movie & TV stuff which I already had finished, including the first part of an "ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS" index which was submitted by one Bob Reed (no, not Robby Reed, Dial H For Hero, that was a mystery series in a house and had nothin' to do with teevee).

Next time I promise to have lots an' lots of comic queries, as well as more of Hilary Barta's fine art.

TELEVISION

TV THEMES

Some errors on my part...in the "Bat Masterson" theme, it goes "They called him Bat", not "His Name was Bat". And in the "Maverick" theme, it's "Livin' on Jacks & Queens", not "off" 'em.

Craig Henderson sends in that lost segment of the "Beverly Hillbillies" opening, which I dodn't get quite right in I.C.:

> "So come along and visit with the Clampett family as they learn the simple pleasures of the hills of Beverly; and that includes the product of our sponsor of the week, the best to you each morning, fresh from Battle Creek; K-E-Double L-O-Double Good, Kellogg's best to you."

As for new requests, for ED EATON my rendition of "F Troop"!

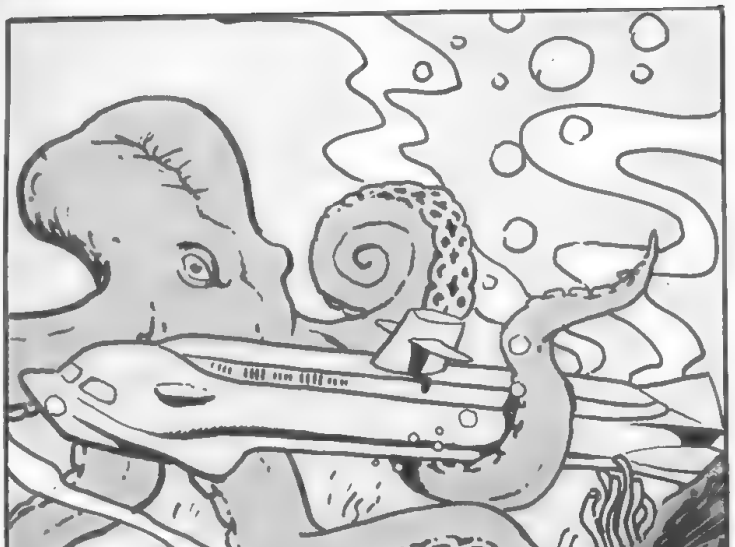
> "The end of the Civil War was near when quite accidentally...a hero who sneezed abruptly seized retreat and reversed it to victory.
>
> His medal of honor pleased and thrilled his proud little family group...while pinning it on some blood was spilled and so it was planned he command F-TROOP!
>
> Where Indian fights are colorful sights and nobody takes a lickin';
>
> Where paleface and redskin
> both turn chicken!
>
> When drilling and fighting get them down they know their morale can't droop...
>
> As long as they all relax in town before they resume with a bang and a boom -- F TROOP!"

For DAVE SIKULA, "The Pruitts of South Hampton" (Pay attention...there're lotsa' different people singin' this song. PD=Phyllis Diller; RG=Reginald Gardner; PF=Pamela Freeman.)

> (PD): (A wild peal of laughter)
> "Howjado, howjado, howjado my dear.
> What a lovely surprise, nice to see you here."
> (RG): "All the bills are long overdue, my dear."
> (PD): "File them under I.O.U.!
> Howjado, howjado, well hello, it's you!
> love my dress, love my jewels, aren't they marviepoo!"
> (PF): "They belong to the Internal Revenue!"
> (PD): "And they've got us eating stew."
> (chorus): "The Pruitts of South Hampton live like the richest folk -- but what the folk don't know is that the Pruitts are flat broke."
> (PD): "Howjado, howjado, howjado my dear."
> (RG): "We are out of Champaign and I'm stuck,my dear!"
> (PD): "Ask the butler to lend you a buck, my dear. Howjado, howjado, howjado!"

Also for Dave is the theme for "Hank", a series which I hesitate to remind readers of, inasmuch as I swiped the premise for use in the original run of "The Pertwillaby Papers" (now showing in George Olshevsky's otherwise great COLLECTOR'S DREAM).

> "HANK":
> "He's up with the sun and he's got the college wingin' as he goes about another swingin' day. At jobs to be done or errands to run, he's A-number-one-okay. He'll dryclean your clothes, be a butler or a porter, if it means another quarter in the bank. He'll get his degree, his Phi-Beta Key, and he'll get 'em both for FREE -- that's HANK!"



BILL COTTER -- Walt Disney Archives
---DO YOU HAVE ANY INFO ON BOB DOWDELL (CHIP MORTON ON "VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA")? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM ANYWHERE ELSE EXCEPT ON THAT SERIES?

I don't believe I have either, and I sure can't find his name in ANY of my lil' reference books. Maybe he was an Irwin Allen special effect.
So what does one do all day around the Disney Archives? Dust ducks?

* * *

RON GOMES -- Toronto, Canada
---HOW ABOUT DOSSIERS ON THE FOLLOWING TV SERIES: "WHIRLYBIRDS", "McKEEVER & THE COLONEL", "FOREIGN EXCHANGE"?

"Whirlybirds"; 111 half-hour episodes; 1957-59; syn. by Desilu; Adventures of a pair of helicopter pilots; Chuck: Kenneth Tobey, P.T.: Craig Hill, with Nancy Hale.

"McKeever and the Colonel"; 26 one-half hour episodes; 9/23/62-63; NBC; Sit-com about a military school cadet and a flustered colonel; Cadet Gary McKeever: Scott Lane, Col. Harvey Blackwell: Allyn Joslyn, Sgt. Barnes: Jackie Coogan.

And it wasn't "Foreign Exchange"...it was...
"FAIR Exchange"; 14 hour episodes (9/21/62 - 12/28/62) (Desilu)(CBS) - 13 half-hour ep. (1/4/63 - ?)
Comedy about an American and a British family that send each other their daughters as exchange students.
American Family - Eddie Walker: Eddie Foy Jr., Patty Walker: Lynn Loring; Larry Walker: Flip Marks; Dorothy Walker: Audrey Christie
British Family - Tommy Finch: Victor Madden; Heather Finch: Judy Carne; Sybil Finch: Diana Chesney; Neville Finch: Dennis Waterman.

---DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THOSE LIL' CARTOONS THAT USED TO RUN ON "CAPT. KANGAROO" LIKE "TOM TERRIFIC", "FRED FROM CHANNEL 1", OR "LARIAT SAM"?

Fred, as I recall, wasn't a cartoon. He was an electronically (or maybe even just manually) manipulated "Puppet". As for Tom and Sam: "The Adventures of Tom Terrific"; 130 four minute episodes (5 episodes per adventure); Terrytoons; with villains such as Isotope Feeney and Crabby Appleton ("He's rotton to the core") plus, of course, Mighty Manfred, the Wonder Dog!

"Adventures Of Lariat Sam"; 65 five minute episodes, 1961-62; Terrytoons; with Sam's poetry-quoting Hoss, Tippytoes, plus Bushwhack and others. Both these cartoons were made expressly for Robert Keeshan Productions.

* * *

JAMES BRUDEN (?) sic -- Toledo, Ohio
---WHAT WAS THE LAST EPISODE OF "BONANZA" WITH PERNELL ROBERTS AND WHAT WAS THE FIRST ONE WITHOUT HIM?

The last episode with Roberts and "Adam" was the final episode of the 6th season, Sept. 5, 1965. Incredible enough, the first episode without Roberts was the next one, the 7th season opener, Sept. 12, 1965. Neat how that works out.

---WHO PLAYED JANET MacLACHLAN'S HUSBAND IN THE SERIES "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR"???

The neighbor-families were thus: Peggy and Charlie Wilson: Joyce Bulifant and Ron Masak; Jackie and Ferguson Bruce: Janet MacLachlan and HARRISON PAGE.

* * *

STAN SLUPCZYNSKI -- Madison Hts., Mich.
---WHAT WAS THE TITLE OF THE LATE NIGHT SHOW HOSTED BY LES CRANE???

"The Les Crane Show" (stranger things have been known to happen); a 90 minute ABC talk show, with the Don Trenner orchestra, lasting from 11/9/64 to 3/1/65.

---THERE WAS A MADE-FOR-TV ANIMATED FEATURE CALLED "THE POINT" THAT I BELIEVE WAS ONLY SHOWN ONCE. THE MUSIC WAS BY HARRY NILSSON WITH THE HIT "ME AND MY ARROW". WHAT INFORMATION CAN YOU GIVE ME ON IT???

"The Point" has been on twice, and a very nice lil' cartoon it was. It was first on in 1971 and supposedly a buncha people with nothing better to do took offense at what they took to be political statements it made (basically concerning law and its blind acceptance). It stayed off the air until all that stuff was forgotten and it was rerun in either late 1974 or early '75. The voice of Oblio was Mike Lookinland (of "The Brady Bunch").

GARY SPIEWAK -- Clark, New Jersey
---SOMEWHERE BACK IN THE EARLY SIXTIES THERE WAS A TV SHOW THAT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE U.S. SENATE OR CONGRESS, WHICH OPENED WITH THE LINE, "DEMOCRACY IS NOT THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT, BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THAT ALL THE OTHERS ARE MUCH WORSE" OR SOMETHING OF THAT NATURE. WHAT SHOW WAS THIS???

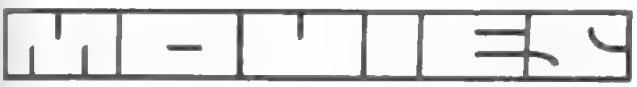
I also distinctly recall that opening line and I believe you got it pretty close. I have it in my head that it was on "The Defenders", but I can't recall why a lawyer series would be making a political statement like that.

* * *

DAVE SIKULA -- Whittier, California
---WHAT WAS THE REGULAR CAST OF "THAT'S LIFE", AND WHO WERE THE MAJOR GUEST STARS???

This was an interesting series; fashioned after a broadway style, it was a musical-comedy hour-long "sit-com", featuring both old and new tunes. Robert Morse was Robert Dickson and Edra Jeanne (E.J.) Peaker was wife, Gloria Quigley Dickson. The only other (semi) regulars I recall were Shelly Berman and Kay Medford as Gloria's parents, plus the Tony Mordente dancers. Glancing through my "TV GUIDE's", I see that each week several big-name stars appeared in various roles, too many to list except in a full-scale series index. "THAT'S LIFE"; 26 episodes, ABC, 9/24/68 - 5/19/69

* * *



BOB ROWE, JR. -- Rochester, New York
---WHATEVER HAPPENED TO IRENE DUNNE AND WHERE DOES SHE NOW LIVE???

In other words, lately what has Irene Dunne? Again, I.C. does not concern itself with "Whatever Became of" type stuff...all I know is that she retired undefeated in 1952, and lives somewhere in southern California. (The silly-ass in me hoped I'd find out she was murdered so that I could report she was Dunne-in.)

---WHAT PERSON HAS MADE THE MOST MOVIES AS AN ACTOR???

An interesting query. The worlds most prolific film actor may not even be listed in my reference works - might be a bit-player or such. And I can only guess at who it might be: As I've paged through my books, the longest list of credits I've consciously noticed is for J. Carroll Naish...some 180 titles or so - maybe MANY more not listed.

---HOW ABOUT AN INDEX OF JULIE ANDREWS' MOVIES? ADAM WEST'S? ELLIOT GOULD'S???

Julie Andrews: THE SINGING PRINCESS (?), MARY POPPINS ('64), THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY ('65), THE SOUND OF MUSIC ('65), TORN CURTAIN ('66), HAWAII ('66), THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE ('67), STAR ('68), DARLING LILI ('69), THE TAMARIND SEED ('73)

Adam West: THE YOUNG PHILADELPHIANS ('59), GERONIMO ('62) TAMMY & THE DOCTOR ('63), SOLDIER IN THE RAIN ('63), ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS ('64), MARA OF THE WILDERNESS ('65), THAT DARN CAT ('65), THE OUTLAWS IS COMING ('65), BATMAN ('66), THE BALLAD OF BLACK LACE ('68), THE GIRL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH ('68), JOHN CAIN ('68), MARRIAGE OF A YOUNG STOCKBROKER ('71)

Elliot Gould: THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINSKY'S ('68), THE PIANO SPORT ('69), BOB AND CAROL AND TED AND ALICE ('69), MOVE ('69), M*A*S*H ('69), GETTING STRAIGHT ('70), I LOVE MY WIFE ('70), THE TOUCH ('70), LITTLE MURDERS ('71), THE LONG GOODBYE ('72), BUSTING ('73), CALIFORNIA SPLIT ('73), WHO? ('73), S*P*Y*S ('74), WHIFFS ('74), I WILL I WILL...FOR NOW ('76), HARRY AND WALTER GO TO NEW YORK ('76), MEAN JOHNNY BARROWS ('75), A BRIDGE TOO FAR ('77)

* * *

JAMES BRUDEN -- Toledo, Ohio
---IS THERE A LIST OF MOVIE SYNOPSISES THAT HAVE BEEN DONE IN"SCREEN STORIES" ?

Not around here there isn't.

---WOULD YOU DO A MOVIE & TV INDEX FOR ENA HARTMAN (KATIE ON TV'S "DAN AUGUST")?

The only other credit I can find on Ena is "OUR MAN FLINT" ('66).

---HAS SAX ROHMER'S CHARACTER "SUMURU" EVER MADE ANY COMIC BOOK OR MAGAZINE OR MOVIE APPEARANCES???

Since Rohmer's work originally appeared in old magazines (at least the "Fu Manchu" tales were magazine serials) I'd guess the same would apply to this "Sumuru" - originally appearing in a magazine around 1910-1915. But as for contemporary appearances...?

---IN THE 1967 FILM "A MAN CALLED DAGGER", WHO PLAYED THE GIRL WHO PICKED UP PAUL MANTEE AT THE AIRPORT AND LATER GOT HUNG UP ON A MEAT HOOK???

I don't think I've ever seen that flic (mercifully so - I've read reviews that describe it as "unrelievedly awful")...but the only broads I know of having appeared innit are Terry Moore, Sue Anne Langdon and Eileen O'Neill.

* * *

JOHN VELLUTINI -- San Francisco, Ca.
---CAN YOU DO MOVIE INDEXES FOR FAITH DOMERGUE AND GLORIA TALBOT???

Faith Domergue: YOUNG WIDOW ('46), WHERE DANGER LIVES ('50), VENDETTA ('50), DUEL AT SILVER CREEK ('52), GREAT SIOUX UPRISING ('53), THIS IS MY LOVE ('54), CULT OF THE COBRA ('55)(she played the Cobra!), SANTA FE PASSAGE ('55), IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA ('55), THIS ISLAND EARTH ('55), THE ATOMIC MAN ('56), SPIN A DARK WEB ('56), ESCORT WEST ('59), CALIFORNIA ('63), VOYAGE TO A PREHISTORIC PLANET (PREHISTORIC PLANET WOMEN) ('65), TRACK OF THUNDER ('68), THE GAMBLERS ('69), BESIEGED ('69), THE PERVERSION ('69), ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER ('70), LEGACY OF BLOOD ('71), SO EVIL MY SISTER ('72), HOUSE OF 7 CORPSES ('73)

Gloria Talbot: NORTHERN PATROL ('53), WE'RE NO ANGELS ('55), LUCY GALLANT ('55), CRASHOUT ('55), ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS ('55), THE YOUNG GUNS ('56), STRANGE INTRUDER ('56), THE OKLAHOMAN ('57), THE KETTLES ON OLD MACDONALD'S FARM ('57), DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL ('57), TAMING SUTTON'S GIRL ('57), CYCLOPS ('57), CATTLE EMPIRE ('58), I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE ('58), ALIAS JESSE JAMES ('59), GIRLS' TOWN ('59), THE OREGON TRAIL ('59), OKLAHOMA TERRITORY ('60), THE LEECH WOMAN ('60), ARIZONA RAIDERS ('65), AN EYE FOR AN EYE ('66)

* * *

WALTER LILLY -- Chappaqua, New York
---WHAT WAS THE MOVIE WHERE TOM EWELL PLAYS A PRESS AGENT WHO BREAKS UP WITH JULIE LONDON BUT KEEPS SEEING GHOSTLY IMAGES OF HER SINGING "CRY ME A RIVER"? COULD YOU LIST TOM & JULIE'S FILMS?

Sure - and you'll hafta' do some work to find the one film common to both lists.
Tom Ewell: THE KANSAS KID ('39), THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED ('40), DESERT PATROL ('41), (Travel films)('48-'49), ADAM'S RIB ('49), A LIFE OF HER OWN ('50), MR. MUSIC ('50), AMERICAN GUERRILLA IN THE PHILIPPINES ('50), UP FRONT ('51), FINDERS KEEPERS ('51), LOST IN ALASKA ('52), WILLIE & JOE BACK AT THE FRONT ('53), THE 7 YEAR ITCH ('55), THE LIEUTENANT WORE SKIRTS ('56), THE GREAT AMERICAN PASTTIME ('56), THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT ('56), A NICE LITTLE BANK THAT SHOULD BE ROBBED ('58), TENDER IS THE NIGHT ('62), STATE FAIR ('62), SUPPOSE THEY GAVE A WAR AND NOBODY CAME? ('69), TO FIND A MAN ('72), THEY ONLY KILL THEIR MASTERS ('73), THE GREAT GATSBY ('75)

Julie London: JUNGLE WOMAN ('44), NABONGA ('45), ON STAGE EVERYBODY ('45), A NIGHT IN PARADISE ('46), THE RED HOUSE ('47), TAP ROOTS ('48), TASK FORCE ('49), RETURN OF THE FRONTIERSMAN ('50), THE FAT MAN ('51), THE FIGHTING CHANCE ('55), CRIME AGAINST JOE ('56), THE GREAT MAN ('56), THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT ('56) (I think that's the one you're looking for), DRANGO ('57), SADDLE THE WIND ('58), VOICE IN THE MIRROR ('58), MAN OF THE WEST ('58), THE WONDERFUL COUNTRY ('59), NIGHT OF THE QUARTER MOON ('59), A QUESTION OF ADULTERY ('59), THE THIRD VOICE ('60), THE GEORGE RAFT STORY ('61), SANCTUARY ('61)

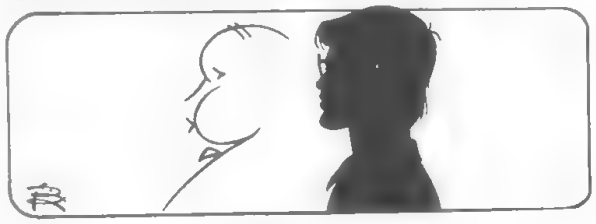
---CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE BRITISH ROCK MUSICAL MOVIE OF THE EARLY-TO-MID SIXTIES WHERE A WORKING-CLASS DELIVERY BOY IS HIT ON THE HEAD AND DREAMS HE BECOMES A ROCK N' ROLL STAR? CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT THE MOVIE "GO-GO MANIA" AND WAS IT THE ONLY FILM THE BEATLES APPEARED IN BESIDES "HARD DAY'S NIGHT", "HELP", "MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR", "YELLOW SUBMARINE" AND "LET IT BE"???

All I can say is "GO-GO MANIA" (1965); no plot, just acts: Beatles, Herman's Hermits, Matt Munro, the Animals, some 12 other acts, and if they ever watch it in apartment #402, I hope they keep the sound low.

There's one other Beatles movie, a compilation of some of their early concerts called "AROUND THE WORLD" ('77).

* * *

INDEX SECTION...



ALFRED

Hitchcock

PRESENTS

PART ONE

"Based on data submitted by Bob Reed"

Run 9:30-10:00 Sunday, CBS

#1 - Oct. 2, 1955
Ralph Meeker and Vera Miles star in the first Hitchcock directed thriller, "REVENGE".
An aircraft expert quits his job to care for his wife, the victim of a recent nervous breakdown. He arrives home to find her unconscious, the victim of a beating. When she revives, they scour the city in a suspenseful search for the guilty party.
Cast - Ralph Meeker, Vera Miles, Francis Bavier and Ray Montgomery.

#2 - Oct. 9, 1955 - "PREMONITION"
A young concert pianist is prompted by a strange premonition to return to his small home town after a four year absence. Once there, he learns that his father has been dead for years, and that his own presence is unwelcome.
Cast - John Forsythe, Cloris Leachman, Warren Stevens, and George Macready.

#3 - Oct. 16, 1955 - "Triggers In Leash"
In an eating place in the old West, an angered gunman tries to goad another into a shooting to even up an old score.
Cast - Gene Barry!!, Darren McGavin!!, Ellen Corby

#4 - Oct. 23, 1955 - "DON'T COME BACK ALIVE"
The story of a couple's scheme to collect a $25,000 life insurance claim. The wife agrees to leave her husband for 7 years - the legal length of time necessary to establish the "death" of a missing person.
Cast - Sidney Blackmer, Virginia Gregg, Robert Emhardt, Irene Teabrory and Edna Holland.

#5 - Oct. 30, 1955 - "INTO THIN AIR"
A young woman and her mother enroute from India to England in 1899, stop off in Paris for a visit. Returning to the hotel at which the two are staying, the girl is refused her key, is told she is not registered and can find no trace of her mother.
Cast - Pat Hitchcock (Alfred's daughter), Mary Forbes, Geoffrey Toone, Gerry Gaylor, Alan Napier, Maurice Marsac.

#6 - Nov. 6, 1955 - "SALVAGE"
A gangland bigshot and ex-convict plot to avenge the death of his younger brother. His ruthlessness is directed at the singer in a cheap night club who was responsible for the death.
Cast - Gene Barry, Nancy Gates, Paul Bryar, Elisha Cook jr., Edit Angold and Virginia Christine

#7 - Nov. 13, 1955 - "BREAKDOWN" -directed by Hitchcock
A New York businessman enroute home from a Miami vacation is involved in an accident with a prison van. Pinned in the wreckage and paralyzed from his injuries, the man is helpless when looters strip the car and take his clothes. Then the rescue party arrives. Unable to cry out, the man is loaded into a truck. Its destination, the mortuary.
Cast - Joseph Cotten, Raymond Bailey, Forrest Stanley

#8 - Nov. 20, 1955 - "OUR COOK'S A TREASURE"
Disturbed because his morning newspaper was disarranged by the housekeeper, a New York businessman is even more distressed to learn what was in the paper before she got ahold of it, a story about an arsenic-poisoning housekeeper who is still at large. Later events convince him that the murderess and his new cook are one and the same.
Cast - Everett Sloane

#9 - Nov. 27, 1955 - "THE LONG SHOT"
In debt and looking for a way to recoup his gambling losses, the rogue answers an ad for a companion to a visiting Englishman.
Cast - Peter Lawford, John Williams, Gertrude Hoffman, Robert Warwick

#10 - Dec. 4, 1955 - "THE CASE OF MR. PELHAM"
A highly successful businessman discovers that friends and associates have seen him and even

spoken to him in places he has never been. He comes to the obvious conclusion that a physical double has been impersonating him.
Cast - Tom Ewell, Raymond Bailey, Kirby Smith, Kay Stewart and John Compton.

#11 - Dec. 11 1955 - "GUILTY WITNESS"
A young couple face a serious problem. Aware that their neighbors often quarrel, they are suspicious when the husband disappears after a particularly violent argument. But they are reluctant to call the police about the incident.
Cast - Judith Evelyn, Joe Mantell, Kathleen Maguire, Robert Simon

#12 - Dec. 18, 1955 - "SANTA CLAUS & THE 10th AVE. KID"
A habitual criminal recently released from prison finds a job as a department store Santa. He has no intention of going straight until he's confronted by a potential juvenile delinquent.
Cast - Barry Fitzgerald and Bobby Clark

#13 - Dec. 25, 1955 - "THE CHENEY VASE"
An elderly semi-invalid spinster clings to a valuable vase, the only shred of family prestige left to her. The vase is sought by many art museums. When she refuses to give it up, a brash young man plots to steal it.
Cast - Patricia Collinge

#14 - Jan. 1, 1956 - "A BULLET FOR BALDWIN"
A meek employee of an investment firm is dismissed abruptly after more than 20 years of service. The man, noted for his meek manner, suddenly undergoes a complete personality change.
Cast - John Qualen, Sebastian Cabot, Philip Reed, Cheryl Clark

#15 - Jan. 8, 1956 - "THE BIG SWITCH"
A gunman who plans to murder his former girlfriend buys an airtight alibi from a notorious character who deals in those services. The gunman's meeting with a boyhood pal, now a detective, proves to be an unlucky break.
Cast - George Matthews, George E. Stone, Joseph Downing, J. Edwards

#16 - Jan. 15, 1956 - "YOU GOT TO HAVE LUCK"
A young wife finds her life in danger when an escaped psychotic criminal seeks refuge at her isolated farm house.
Cast - John Cassavates, Marisa Pavan, Ray Teal, Hal K. Dawson, Bob Patten

#17 - Jan. 22, 1956 - "THE OLDER SISTER"
Tells the story of the unique Lizzie Borden murder case. The double murder of a father and a mother was discovered by a newspaper woman.
Cast - Joan Lorring, Carmen Mathews, Polly Rowles, Pat Hitchcock, Wendy Winkleman

#18 - Jan. 29, 1956 - "SHOPPING FOR DEATH"
Two retired insurance men originate an unusual formula for predicting impending tragedies. The case in question concerns a Mrs. Shrike who has not only alienated her friends but earned her husband's hatred.
Cast - Jo Van Fleet, Robert Harris, John Qualen, Mike Ross.

#19 - Feb. 5, 1956 - "THE DERELICTS"
An ambitious businessman hopelessly in dept, attempts to save himself by eliminating his creditor. Unfortunately for him, the homicide is witnessed by a pair of tramps who capitalize on their knowledge by moving into the apartment occupied by the culprit and his wife.
Robert Newton, Philip Reed, Peggy Knudsen, Johnny Silver, Robert Foulk, Cyril Delevante

#20 - Feb. 12, 1956 - "AND SO DIED RIABOUCHINSKA"
A weird ventriloquist is involved in the murder of a juggler whose body is found in the basement of an old vaudeville house.
Cast - CLAUDE RAINS!!, Charles Bronson

NEXT ISSUE: The conclusion of the first year index to ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS.

And that's where it all ends for this ish, 'til next time. So send your questions on comics, teevee, pulps, movies and stuff, including your suggestions for comic and TV indexes, as well as nominations for the Comic Book Hall of Fame and the Movie Hall of Infamy. I'd also like to hear your comments on the latest episode of PERTWILLABY PAPERS. When sending questions try to include a couple of extra stamps to help out on the research. And try to overlook those drastic fubars when writing to:

KENO DON ROSA - RBCC IC, 4012 DuPont Circle
Sherwood Apts. #401
Louisville, Kentucky 40207

Be seeing you!

Don Rosa

"CAPTAIN QUIRK REPORTING... HAVE ENTERED ORBIT OF PLANET EARTH..."
BUT CAPTAIN! REPORTS SHOW LIFE FORMS ON THIS PLANET ARE INTELLIGENT!
©1978 H. BARTA
WELL YOUR REPORTS ARE WRONG, MR. POCK! THESE EARTHLINGS ARE NOTHING BUT BABBLING MORONIC IDIOTS!
THEY KEEP SENDING US RADIO MESSAGES LIKE: "SQUA TRONT!" "SPA FON?" "KLAATU BARRADA NIKTO!"....
GOOD LORD!

twilight of the heroes

ART AND STORY BY RON WILBER '77
SPECIAL THANKS TO JIM VAN HISE

ANY RESEMBLANCE TO PERSONS OR CHARACTORS LIVING OR DEAD, IS PURELY INTENDED.

In RBCC #'s 137 & 139-141 I revealed how a cover-up began in 1955 concerning the deaths between then and 1964 of many super heroes. Batman began the investigation and his sidekick was killed along with others. Last issue some heroes were attacked by the strange beast below.

What will happen next?

AND REMEMBER THIS... IT REALLY HAPPENED!

TWILIGHT OF THE HEROES PART III

CLAP!
HOORAY
ELVIS!
CLAP!
CLAP!
I DON'T THINK I COULD CARRY HIM MUCH LONGER.
THIS GUY IS HEAVY!
KAPTAIN AMERIKA!
THAT'S MY NAME.
HEY SURFACE-DWELLERS, HOWS ABOUT LENDING ME A HAND?
GRROARRR!
GOOD LORD!!! WHAT HAPPENED TO BETMAN?!!
A KNIFE IN THE CHEST — WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COSTUME?!!
THAT BEAST TORE IT!!!
YOU MUST HELP NOMOR DEFEAT THAT MONSTER!
TREMENDOUS.
YES IT IS A LARGE MONSTER.
THEY SURE ARE...
AREN'T THOSE SUPER-HEROES DISGUSTING? A BUNCH OF REAL CHAUVINISTS! BUT I HAVE TO SWALLOW HARD AND DEPICT THIS STUFF, CAUSE IT'S ALL IN THESE FILES AND IT'S THE TRUTH. YOU SHOULD SEE SOME OF THE STUFF JIM AND I DECIDED WASN'T FIT TO PRINT.
LISTEN, DO YOU THINK I LIKE DRAWING STUFF LIKE YOU SEE ON THIS PAGE? A BIG BREASTED HALF-NAKED WOMAN, YOU THINK I LIKE THAT??!!
WOOF! WOOF!
SHUT-UP, NO ONE ASKED YOU.
I THINK HE HAS A CHANCE.
YOU DO?
WELL, A MILLION TO ONE, BUT A CHANCE.
YEAH... I GUESS.
I'M GOING TO HELP NOMOR, DO YOUR BREAST - A ER BEST TO MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE.

I'LL HAVE TO TRY AND GET ON THE MONSTERS BACK, AND BREAK HIS NECK!
GRROARR
NOW, HOW TO HELP SUB-MARUNAR, I HAD TO LEAVE MY SHIELD BEHIND TO CARRY BETMAN-
WAIT-A-MINUTE-THAT'S IT...
WUNNER WOMAN, THROW ME THAT KNIFE THAT'S STUCK IN BETMAN!
I CAN USE IT AS A WEAPON
FINALLY, IT'S DEAD, I JUST HOPE I DIDN'T HURT MYSELF.
HA-HA-
CRACK
ON SECOND THOUGHT YOU BETTER NOT THROW - THE KNIFE.
HEY I KILLED THE MONSTER- I EECH
WHIIZ
THUD
SUB-MARUNAR, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU BEFORE YOU DIE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
TO DIE OF OLD AGE.
NOMOR - I'M SO SORRY!
IT'S NOT YOU'RE FAULT, I KNEW WHEN I GOT UP THIS MORNING I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN BED - IT JUST WASN'T MY DAY
SUFFERIN' SHAD, FIRST BETMAN AND NOW NOMOR.
I FEEL LIKE IT'S MY FAULT...
AND IT'S YOUR FAULT-
HEY, YOU TOLD ME TO THROW THAT KNIFE!
WHO SAID YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO ME?
YOU BASTARD!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WE?
STOP CRYING, I HAVE AN IDEA FOR SOMETHING WE CAN DO, BUT I NEED YOUR ANSWER FIRST.
SOB SOB SOB
WHISPER-WHISPER-PSSST-HISST-MUMBLE-MUMBLE.
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK TO PARADISE ISLAND-
AND AWAY FROM CREEPS LIKE YOU!
KA-PSW!
DOES THIS MEAN THE ANSWER IS NO?
CONTINUED...

CRITIQUE

10. Superb
9. Excellent
8. Very Good
7. Good
6. Fairly Good
5. Fair
4. Tolerable
3. Poor
2. Very Poor
1. Worthless

CRITIQUE is basicly a review column, but we will not specificly recommend that you buy or not buy a particular item. We will review each item to the best of our ability and let each reader take it from there. We will be reviewing almost any item (fanzines, prozines, records, portfolios, tapes, posters, or just anything of general interest) with one exception. We will not be doing any SFCA publications for obvious reasons. CRITIQUE offers a readership of nearly two thousand and CRITIQUE will also offer the publisher of any item we review up to one hundred words of free space to rebut his review, if he chooses to do so, providing his review is less than an "8" rating. All rebuttals to appear in the next column must be in our hands at least five days before the ad deadline of the next RB&CC or they will be run in the following issue. If you have an item you would like reviewed, send a copy of it to: CRITIQUE, 9025 S.W. 48th Terr., Miami, Florida 33165

A few things to remember: Where UNDERGROUNDS are concerned, you must be 18 or older to order them. All fanzines reviewed are 8 1/2 x 11 with offset printing and wraparound binding unless otherwise noted. From time to time there may be a publication over which two of our reviewers have wide disagreement and in which case two reviews of the same book will be run in the interest of fairness.

A FINAL NOTE: The only reason for CRITIQUE is as a service to fandom. If you appreciate what we are trying to do then let us know. Your support can be shown in numerous ways: If you order an item because of our review then please mention CRITIQUE in your order, and of course the RB&CC would appreciate your subscription and advertising support. Naturally, your comments are welcomed.

JAMES VAN HISE / EDITOR

Last issue I inadvertantly listed the wrong single copy price for THE COMICS JOURNAL. It should be 75¢, not one dollar.

The following is an unrated review done by George Beahm.

TK II, Box 27, MIT Branch, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (Catalog of offerings sent free upon request: a digest sized, 32 page, illustrated catalog.)

Since its inception in 1972, TK II has consistently brought out a fine line of booklets, posters, art prints, color slides, and unique, limited edition items on a regular basis with surprisingly modest prices. Bob Wiener, head of TK II, said that his earlier publications are now mostly out of print and unavailable at any prices. ZOOKS, LIZARD ZEN, and five large Deadbone pages are examples of his early efforts. Not surprisingly, his current efforts are superb in quality, and are exceptional values, considering the rising popularity of the fantasy artists due to mass exposure in national magazines and books.

For Edgar Rice Burroughs fans there is a portfolio, numbered and signed by each artist who contributed -- Dan Green, Jeff Jones, Mike Kaluta, Al Williamson and Berni Wrightson -- in an edition of 500. For fans of Jeff Jones, there is a wealth of fine prints and lithographs: part of a series, two separate lithographs, numbered and signed, in editions of 120 for the first lithograph, and 100 of the second lithograph; a set of Idyl pages from NATIONAL LAMPOON, five in number, 21" x 29", the size of the originals; and two full color fine art prints of "The Black Rose" and "The Wall", poignant paintings -- the former which some may remember seeing as the cover to the first paperback edition of Roger Zelazny's NINE PRINCES IN AMBER, the second appearing in print for the first time. And showcasing the talent of a fine fantasy illustrator, two prints numbered and signed by the artist and writer, Tom Canty and Roger Zelazny, focusing on the Amber characters, a series of fifteen art prints.

There have been numerous fan publishers, blowing their wad and energies in one final (and oftentimes disasterous) effort. Numerous pro and semi-pro publishers also premiere magnificently and are never heard of again. But Bob Wiener has consistently exercised good judgment and taste in making available at moderate cost a series of fine publications, beautiful to behold and own, and this is very rare indeed.

GEORGE BEAHM

HOT STUF' #5 - $1.50 - 48 pages - 7 x 10 - Published by Sal Quartuccio, 770 East 45th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11203

HOT STUF' is a very fine "ground-level" comic, and in some respects better than STAR*REACH, but for some reason, publisher Sal Quartuccio seems to like these so-called "novel epics" by Herb Arnold and his friends. His friends, of course, are such wonderful artists as Richard Corben and Tim Kirk, but someone has got to tell Mr. Arnold that he is just not a very good writer.

This issue is almost identical to HOT STUF' #3. One need only refer to my review of that issue back in RBCC #134 to know how I feel about this latest one.

This is the second time now that HOT STUF' has devoted an entire issue to what is primarily one story. I don't like this type of format. If it was being done really well, then I'm sure I would reconsider, but as it is, I must say I prefer the "general material" format. That way, we get a number of different writers expressing a number of different viewpoints and imaginations.

The art this time, if I can recall issue #3 (which I don't have on hand to compare), is better. It was not bad before, but both Stan Dresser, and especially Herb Arnold, have improved considerably as artists. The Kirk art is fine, as usual, and the Corben, as it was in #3, is nice but not at all what he is capable of.

HOT STUF' #5 is great to have as an art book. If you've got a Corben collection going, you should order this simply for the beautiful cover by him. Incidentally, it's the Corben strip that seems to have the best writing. It's the easiest to follow, anyway.

What bothers me about Arnold's writing is that he's trying to use, or perhaps even imitate, what might be described as "fantasy writing", which is fine if you can do it well and naturally. But as Arnold does it here, his style is not at all as readable as, say, Tolkien. He also uses an abundance of peculiar names like Ivanthriel and Trwill and Grettamora and you

must continually refer back to preceeding pages to figure out just who is who. He makes this even worse by having some of these characters impersonate other characters with names just as strange as their own. Also, very little characterization is evident anywhere in the book, thus making it even harder to distinguish the players.

Beyond that, Arnold's plotting is very bad. On one page we see assassins hiding behind sand dunes seemingly waiting to attack the passing sand ships. Then suddenly the scene shifts to an odd sexual interlude with only minimal purpose.

A recent issue of MARVEL PREMIERE featured a story called SEEKER 3000 by Doug Moench and Tom Sutton, and it is probably some of the finest comic writing to appear in a comic in months. It was a complex story, yet everything was made immediately clear through careful, purposeful dialogue and captions. Reader comprehension should be foremost in an author's mind. If only he knows what is happening in a story, then he's failed.

Still, I look forward to future issues of HOT STUF' Comics like it and STAR*REACH are still in the stages of development, and hopefully they will soon begin to realize their incredible potential.

RATING 6 / MARK BURBEY

QUESTAR #1 - $2.50 postpaid - 40 pages - Published by William G. Wilson, Jr., 1535 Onedia Drive, Jefferson Borough, Penn. 15025

Since ceasing publication of THE COLLECTOR a few years ago, I had assumed that Bill Wilson had left fandom for good. I was under the impression that he was one of those fans who, for various reasons, felt he had "grown up" and that it was time to stop fooling around with comic books.

Fortunately, I was wrong in my assumption and Bill Wilson is back in the publisher's chair with a brand new magazine called QUESTAR. Bill calls it, "The NEW Magazine of Science Fiction and Fantasy," which pretty much makes clear the format and direction he intends for the book.

QUESTAR #1 is a combination of art, text and graphics. Most of the art is brand-new stuff by people like Steve Fabian, Joe Sinnott, Roy Krenkel and Clyde Caldwell, as well as talented newcomers like Anthony Desensi and James Warhola.

The graphic stories, as Bill calls them, are excellent. They really make the book perfect. The first is a six page strip by Steve Ditko called "Cosage, The Cosmic Agent". It looks and reads like a super-condensed version of the first four issues of SHADE. The art is excellent and the pacing will make you dizzy. The other strip is a four page vignette by Gene Day called "Rogg". The script is a clever one by Gene, and the art is his best yet.

The text is a smart mixture of fiction and non-fiction, some of it good, some of it not. In the non-fiction department are two articles; one speculative piece by William Cantey called "The Triumph of STAR WARS", and the other a very interesting and well-written article by our own editor James Van Hise titled "Close Encounters with STAR WARS". The first article by Cantey deals with a lot more than STAR WARS discussing and comparing various science fiction and fantasy genres, as well as talking about numerous film projects that are in the works. Jim's piece reminisces about his first tastes of STAR WARS fever (the effects of which he felt looonnnggg before anybody even knew about the film) and about his personal conversations with several people directly involved with STAR WARS, like Mark Hamill.

The quality of the fiction, I'm afraid, does not compare with that of the non-fiction. Bill Wilson contributes the only entertaining story, a nice two page bit of fanciful fluff telling the "true" story of Alice's trip through the looking glass. Supposedly, Lewis Carroll led us all astray with a rather distorted view of the alternate reality known as Wonderland. But Bill sets the records straight, with a little help from Cheshire, and it makes for some fun reading.

The bulk of the fiction, namely two stories by William James Reynolds, is not really worthy of publication. Mr. Reynolds, who I am told is somewhat of a fandom veteran, fancies himself a writer of ability and professionalism, and it is possible that he has the makings of one. But he has a bad eye for plots that should be developed into stories.

The longer of his two stories, "A Burden Of Guilt", is a totally pointless tale that depends too strongly on cliched descriptions and mannerisms. The story itself goes nowhere. Nothing of any meaning or importance happens. Things are contrived merely to justify other things. If this story was good enough to write in the first place (which it isn't), it should have started some seven paragraphs after Mr. Reynolds opens it. The ending was highly predictable and totally incomprehensible. I would greatly appreciate a letter from Mr. Reynolds explaining what on Earth it means. The Fabian drawings that accompany it are nice, but in no way do they improve it.

Reynolds' second story, a one-page quickie called "A Word From Our Sponsor" is even worse. Reynolds' writing isn't bad, actually, in fact it's fairly good as far as its tone is concerned. But despite his good grammar and punctuation, he often fails to make clear what he is trying to say. This is particularly evident in the aforementioned longer story. Even hack writers have enough talent to make themselves understood. His writing, however, is not what destroys "A Word From Our Sponsor". It's the insipid premise of the thing. Totally absurd, even for fantasy.

With a couple of minor exceptions, QUESTAR is a fine magazine, and excellent for a first issue. I would like to see Bill instate something like an interview-of-the-issue with prominent SF authors. This would be preferable if he is unable to obtain better fiction.

The two color covers by Ken Barr and Morris Scott Dollens, and the entirely typeset interiors make this a fanzine that no one should pass up.

RATING 9 / MARK BURBEY

WALLY WOOD'S WEIRD SEX-FANTASY PORTFOLIO - $20.00 - Twelve plates (12" x 16") in a gold embossed slipcase.

WILL EISNER'S THE SPIRIT PORTFOLIO - $35.00 - Twelve plates (12" x 16", ten in full color) - in a special gold embossed hardcover slipcase.

Will Eisner's THE SPIRIT poster - 16" x 20" - $3.00

Published by Collector's Press, Box 1009, Carmel Valley, Calif. 93924

The portfolio market has grown rapidly over the past several years. Middle Earth has slipped into the background in light of its financial problems and the accusations leveled by people who have ordered items and never received them (often because Middle Earth never published them). Christopher Enterprises recently went bankrupt which brought a sudden end to its output. But other portfolio publishers have arisen and these have delivered the goods they have promised, as well as introducing some novel approaches to the field.

The WALLY WOOD WEIRD SEX-FANTASY portfolio mixes sex and science fiction in a series of eleven sexy drawings by Wally Wood. The twelfth plate is Wood's introduction to the portfolio. The drawings are all very good Wood art, not as spectacular as his E.C. art, but very nice nonetheless. The portfolio is rated "X" by the publishers but an "R" rating would be more realistic. The portfolio features female (but no

male) nudity and even the full frontal nudity is not really explicit. The scenes all involve classic SF settings in which a nude female is either in danger or is the main character in one form or another. Most of the drawings are gag pieces and the best ones feature Flash Gordon (who looks helplessly from a cell while Dale is raped by Ming) and STAR WARS (in which Darth Vader is preparing to do something unspeakable to a nude Princess Leia just as Luke Skywalker comes to the rescue). It's fun but not as sexually heavy as the ads might lead you to believe. So if you buy it without expecting artwork in a heavy underground type of vein, you shouldn't be disappointed at all.

The Will Eisner SPIRIT portfolio is much more ambitious than the Wood portfolio in that every piece is full color. The ten pieces in full color range from scenes in Wildwood cemetary, fights with hoodlums, The Spirit captured by his enemies, and a fantastic piece titled "Dead End" which features The Spirit standing on a pier in the driving rain, seemingly held at bay by a group of gunman. It is the definitive piece of Spirit art. As is typical of Eisner's Spirit, the drawings also emphasize the grimy realism of the big city and its poorer sections. As in the case of the Wood portfolio, all of these drawings are brand new. The artwork is all excellent and is some of the finest post-forties Spirit work that Eisner has done. One dealer criticized this portfolio as being "too extravagant", mainly refering to the hardcover slipcase which tends to boost the price a little. The $35.00 price tag puts it way above the price range of the average portfolio, but then this isn't the average portfolio. Eisner fans shouldn't worry about getting their money's worth with this item. They most certainly will. People with only a casual interest in Eisner or The Spirit will probably find this a little too extravagant for them.

The Will Eisner Spirit poster is printed on heavy slick paper. The Eisner art is a bit loose although it's still okay. The illustration is a surrealistic scene whose meaning is a bit uncertain. It's more odd than it is striking. The more traditional renderings in the portfolio are much more to my liking.

RATINGS: WALLY WOOD PORTFOLIO / 8
SPIRIT PORTFOLIO / 9
SPIRIT POSTER / 7 / JAMES VAN HISE

FOG CITY COMICS #1 - $1.00 - 36 pages - 7 x 10 - Published by Stampart, P.O. Box 48385, Bentall Station, Vancouver, Canada
NO DUCKS #1 - $1.00 - 36 pages - 7 x 10 - Published by Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, P.O. Box 212, Berkeley, Cal. 94701
FEAR & LAUGHTER - $1.00 - 36 pages - 7 x 10 - Published by Kitchen Sink Enterprises, Box 7, Princeton, Wisc. 54968
FAERIE STAR #1 - $1.50 + 25¢ postage - 40 pages - 7 x 10 - Published by John David Cothran, 2461 Lunada Lane, Walnut Creek, Cal. 94595

It's been a long time since I've reviewed any underground comics for the RBCC. If you were to ask me why, I'd have to say that it was because I hadn't seen many underground comics at all in the past year or so, and the ones I did see just didn't thrill me enough to bother with.

But lately, a number of truly fine undergrounds have come out. Two of them that I'll be reviewing here are parodies of the old funny animal comics and cartoons, one is a parody of Hunter S. Thompson, and the fourth is a general material comic.

FOG CITY COMICS and NO DUCKS are both funny animal comics, but when compared to one another, they are as different as day and night. NO DUCKS presents a kind of humor that is more subtle than it is wild and outrageous, whereas FOG CITY COMICS features material that is extremely reminiscent of the funny animal cartoons of the 40's and transposes it with personalities similar to those seen in underground comics of the late 60's and early 70's. Don't get me wrong, NO DUCKS has its share of insanity, but it's a more mellow kind of craziness.

NO DUCKS is a comic edited by Tim Boxell, who got several of his artist friends to contribute. Boxell's art has improved enormously. His panels have much better construction, and he's showing a great deal more control with both his pencils and his inks. One interesting thing Boxell does is a 3 page parody of Moebius, and he does a very good job of it. The continuity is not at all as good as Moebius himself would do, but the art is excellent, and it is fun to get into despite the rather sophomoric ending. Probably the best of Boxell's collaborators is Rich Larson, with whom he worked on numerous strips and covers for Charlton. Rich writes and draws his own strip here, and is probably one of the best strips in the book. For a humorous style of art, it is very good, though Rich is better suited for horror strips. The story is funny and fun to read.

FOG CITY COMICS, like many undergrounds, offers much more in the way of what might be called "vulgar" humor. George Metzger contributes a fine strip that is also probably the only "clean" strip in the comic. But if you enjoy the obscene brand of humor that usually has no bounds in a codeless comic, FOG CITY COMICS is for you. Definitely the best strip in this one is a thing by Rand Holmes called "Nip & Tuk in Anal Antics". It is a laugh riot from the word go. On the very first page, a pair of mice drop a car engine on top of a cat's head, a la the old "falling anvil" trick. But Holmes opts for realism, and instead of temporarily flattening the cat's head, it crushes it entirely and the cat dies; something you wouldn't see in a Warner's cartoon.

FEAR & LAUGHTER is one of the finest comix I have seen in a long time. The art is excellent and the writer is clever and humorous. This one is edited by Scott Shaw, who contributes several scripts and strips and managed to get people like Bill Stout, John Pound and Larry Todd, to name a few, to contribute. Every strip is a parody of the insane, drug-crazed adventures of that nutso gonzo journalist, Hunter S. Thompson, alternately known as "Raoul Duke." One fine strip, though, that doesn't seem to have much at all to do with Thompson, is a thing called "An Unsolved Murder" by Rick Geary. It strikes me as being a comic strip done in the style of Richard Brautigan. Now, if you don't know who Brautigan is, you're really limiting yourself, but he has a very distinctive style known for its simplicity and its subtle strangeness. FEAR & LAUGHTER is worth having just for this strip.

Also, Kitchen Sink, who published FEAR & LAUGHTER, is printing all its comix on a fine white paper, as opposed to the pulp paper that most undergrounds use. What an improvement.

Finally, there's a fine comic called FAERIE STAR. It qualifies as an underground due primarily to its format, and it's printed on much better stock than the Kitchen Sink comix. I would say that the material here is 3/4 good, and 1/4 mediocre. The best stuff is by Gene Day, who contributes two 3-page vignettes. His art is really superb, and the two things he does here, "Paper Dragon" (which was reprinted in SPACE WARS magazine), and "Hobo Dreamer" are both fine examples of his work. Also present is Will Meugniot, who has appeared in a number of undergrounds including DR. WIRTHAM'S COMIX & STORIES. His art has gotten much better than when he first started getting published. He could use some help with his writing, but it's not bad. He does have one failing; he only has one woman's face that he can draw, which he merely changes the general shape of from strip to strip. A guy named Ken Raney provided the color cover and a 7 page strip. His bag is imitating Barry Smith. Bob Gould is an artist who is influenced by Smith, but

manages to look fresh and different. Raney, however, is good, but he will have to improve and begin to develop his own style before he can make a place for himself among the already crowded circle of comic artists.

RATINGS: NO DUCKS / 9 FOG CITY COMICS / 9
FEAR & LAUGHTER / 10 FAERIE STAR / 7 / MARK BURBEY

AFTA #1 - $1.00 - 88 pages - 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 - Published by Bill-Dale Marcinko, RRO 5009, Rutgers U., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903 (from Sept. 1 thru May 15), and 47 Crater Ave., Wharton, New Jersey 08903 (all the other times). Subs are $1.50 for #2-3, or $2.50 for #1-3.

This is a fanzine which the purists would contend is much more of a true fanzine than RBCC, TCJ, etc are. Perhaps they're right, although I don't think so because I don't think that a zine can be "too good" to be a fanzine merely because it uses a more ambitious format (which allows it to do more than a cheaper format would).

The main purpose of AFTA is to communicate, and it does it on a level which isn't quite as formal (stuffy?) as the RBCC, but rather as if we were all friends getting together at a convention to swap stories. It's comfortable and it's fun.

The lead feature is an interview with George Perez. It is much better than any interview with him I've read previously. Perez is extremely candid, especially when discussing Rich Buckler. It spans 6 pages and is concluded in the second issue of AFTA.

The next six pages cover sexism and Red Sonja. It doesn't have to do with the comic book directly, but with an act that Frank Thorne and three femme fans do at New Jersey comic conventions. The debate arises due to the efforts of one Marilyn Jo Bethke who calls the show "sexist" and has taken her case to various media, including in print in TBG #197. I hadn't really been that familiar with this tempest in a teapot but I recognized Marilyn Jo Bethke's name as the same person who is writing an article on the RBCC for THE COMICS JOURNAL #40. I found the Red Sonja situation most interesting in the light of this as she had criticized what she termed "sadism" and "bondage" in some drawings by Steve Fabian, Mike Zeck and John A. Richardson in RBCC #'s 137 & 138. The article in AFTA primarily concentrates on the response of the people who have been verbally attacked for putting on the Red Sonja show (a show which even Marvel has written up in SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN). It's a very interesting article.

There's also several pages of comic book reviews. Some may question the value of this since they're all comics that have already come and gone on the stands to be replaced by newer issues of those titles, but it's still interesting to read what the opinions of other fans are.

There are also several pages of fanzine reviews. The reviews are catagorized and although they don't go into as much depth as "Critique" does, they generally tell you enough about the zine for you to decide if you want to try and check it out for yourself.

Although this zine is primarily interested in comics, it also delves into films (just like the good ol' RBCC does) and features several pages of film news (lots of stuff I didn't even know) as well as reviews of all sorts of films.

AFTA also has an article on THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW and despite the author's enthusiasm for the film, the article is riddled with errors. For example, lyrics are misquoted, the character Eddie is referred to as another of Dr. Scott's students (he's not, he's Dr. Scott's nephew) and he even says that Brad and Janet get married in the beginning of the film (which they obviously don't for after attending the wedding of a friend, they get engaged and do a song in the chapel but they don't get married as the characters in the background are preparing for a funeral while Brad and Janet do their song. One of the lyrics he screws up is in Riff-Raff's song when he turns the tables on Frankfurter in the climax of the film for the line "You are now my prisoner" is jumbled in that article and turned into "You know I'm a prisoner" which it might sound like if you don't hear too good. There are lyrics in the film which are hard to pick up at first but that song doesn't include any of them. The article needed a proofreader who knows ROCKY HORROR better than Bill-Dale Marcinko does.

There are also a couple cartoons, one of them an "X" rated cartoon involving Yellowjacket & the Wasp. I thought it was funny. There are also some cartoons involving religious satire (i.e. Anita Bryant).

This is a zine to read and get into. Skimming it doesn't give you a good idea of what it has. The fans who can't afford to sink hundreds of dollars into a single issue of their zine, strive to do a good text zine. Some succeed, but few succeed as well as this.

The format of this first issue is interesting and varied but I hope the second issue tries some other things so as not to become stale. For instance, the comic book reviews were interesting once, but I don't think that doing that many in the second issue would bring any further interest or insight.

If more fanzines which are sent to me for review were as interesting to read as this, more fanzines would be reviewed here.

RATING 8 / JAMES VAN HISE

STARLOG #13 - $1.75 - 80 pages - subs 8/$10.98 - Published by O'Quinn Studios, Inc., 475 Park Ave. South, N.Y., N.Y. 10016

This magazine has been published for a year and a half and has done what any good magazine should do. It has grown and matured. Early issues emphasized STAR TREK while seeking a direction for the magazine. It has since become the definitive newsstand publication on SF film & television. It is remarkably up to date in its reporting and covers the entire field remarkably well. Its series on the men behind the special effects is one of the most valuable of its kind ever to appear as it has broken a lot of ground and given credit to a lot of people who had been previously unknown to fandom at large. This series in particular is excellent because it is very technically oriented and makes for fascinating reading.

One interesting facet of this magazine is that it covers the field impartially, not registering any advance opinions but reporting it as straight news. They have only recently started to depart from this at all and even then it was a piece on the LOGAN'S RUN tv series after it went off the air.

The latest issue has that one interview that STAR WARS fans have been waiting to see. It's with Dave Prowse, the man who played Darth Vader. It's a candid and informative piece and presents many, many photos of Prowse.

Although most of the issue is devoted to the present SF film scene, they also occasionally cover the classics, and this issue has a fine article on George Pal's marvelous TIME MACHINE, and it contains information which isn't in the book on Pal's films which was published recently.

STARLOG is the CINEFANTASTIQUE of the mass newsstand distribution SF magazines. It has taken time for it to get as good as it is now, but the wait was well worth it. With only a $1.75 price tag it features a lot of interior color and presents its material in the most attractive format possible. STARLOG is so good that one wonders someone else hadn't done it sooner. It shows what can be done when people try.

RATING 10 / JAMES VAN HISE

MS
MARVEL

2701 Maplewood Dr., Champaign, Ill 61820

IN THE LAST TWO outings of this column, we looked briefly, issue by issue, at the satire in the first 14 issues of HOWARD THE DUCK, the most innovative comic book to come down the pike in a decade. By way of wrapping up this examination, let me try to assess Steve Gerber's accomplishment as a whole--looking at the satiric thrust of the body of his work as represented by those 14 issues.

While Gerber's satirical points were occasionally blunted and once or twice went a trifle astray, he succeeded more often than not in skewering the objects of his assaults. In the first 14 issues, he satirized such things as the conventions of superheroics, the economic and world-controlling pretensions of mankind, macho popular culture, the demeaning nature of most jobs, gothic novels, religious cultism, and the American political system. But the major thrust of Gerber's effort (for 6 of the 14 issues) concerned itself with the existential question of the individual's proper role in society. The villain is conformity. The quest is for individuality--for maintaining a sense of personal identity in the face of social pressures to conform. Non-conformity is championed --and questioned--as a solution to the problem.

Howard wrestles with questions here that are as old as the human condition. Indeed, they are inherent in the human condition. Man is a social animal and lives in community with other men. To function smoothly, society requires adherence to certain forms and customs. By their nature, some of those customs are restrictive, confining (to put the matter as charitably as possible). But men have individual desires, the achievement of which sometimes urges them to break with the customs of their societies --or to change them. The situation--the human condition--fosters this fundamental conflict, the conflict between individual desires and social expectations. It is inescapable; it is the nature of man. But it is not all bad. This conflict is the dynamo of the human condition: it generates change. History is the chronicle of that change.

The creative consciousness is liable to balk most dramatically in the face of social pressure to conform. One definition of creativity sees it as "deviant (unusual) activity." To create is to do something out of the ordinary. The creative personality therefore comes into conflict quite early with his society's impulse towards conformity. Perhaps for this reason, much literature (a product of creative persons) deals with this conflict and champions individual victory over conformity. To create, after all, implies that one "win" the struggle.

The impulse of the creative personality is to reject social influence, to invalidate the "truths" upon which the necessity for conformity rests--ultimately, to condemn society out-of-hand. But the creative personality is not alone in this: it is merely more sensitive than other personalities about the self-diminishing effects of conformity. To a very great extent, we all feel those effects as we grow to maturity: throughout adolescence, as we test our capacities, we feel the restricting and confining pressures that seem to restrain individual aspirations. Perhaps "maturity" is nothing more than the loss of carefree youthful aspirations; perhaps it is realistic recognition of the limitations of the human condition and of its responsibilities. Whatever --youth and age are pitted against each other; the former seeks to expand horizons while the latter tries to preserve the status quo in which it has grown comfortable. One seeks a life free of care; the other, to impose social responsibility. And both lay legitimate claim

REMEMBERING
Rene Goscinny, 1926-1977

Writer for ASTERIX and LUCKY LUKE (above) as well as other successful strips.

to man's loyalties.

Howard (he sparked this sermon, remember?) struggles for five issues (#10-14) to reconcile the dilemma and ends by reconciling himself to it. He begins by rejecting society in order to "be himself." He rejects the impulses of cultural conditioning as being foreign to his "real" self. In the end, however, I think he abandons the search for self because it is ultimately life-denying and therefore pointless. Instead, he embraces life with all its contradictions. Rather than resolve the struggle, he resolves to continue it--to continue to assert his individuality in the face of pressure to conform, to continue with no real hope of ever finishing the struggle.

Howard's decision is clearly existential. Like Albert Camus, Howard chooses to perpetuate the absurdity as an act of affirming life; like Camus, he chooses to remain faithful to the world rather than to question it. "I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning," Camus wrote. "But I know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one. This world has at least the truth of man, and our task is to provide its justifications against fate itself. And it has no justification but man; hence he must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life."

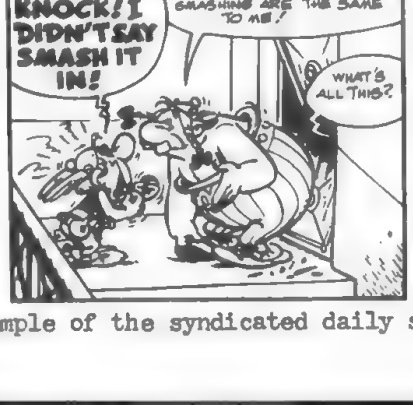
This is pretty heavy stuff for a comic book. And it is a measure of Marvel's publishing courage that it permitted Gerber to explore in these unaccustomed regions, that it dared to approach philosophy, protected only by the thin veil of satire.

Caricatures of Goscinny by two of his artists, Uderzo (ASTERIX) and Morris (LUCKY LUKE).

DISPLAY SPACE this time is given over to a couple of the creations of Rene Goscinny, who died November 7 just as one of his creatures, ASTERIX, was launched into American newspaper syndication by Field. Born in France, Goscinny spent some time in the U.S. before he returned to his homeland to write comics. He joined the LUCKY LUKE enterprise in 1955, but it was ASTERIX that brought Goscinny world-wide fame. Although Maurice Horn would have ASTERIX in decline (according to his opinionated ENCYCLOPEDIA), the facts suggest otherwise: ASTERIX books have sold well over 100 million, and the American syndication alone bespeaks a growing (not a declining) popularity. Featuring a feisty Gaul in Roman times, ASTERIX clearly appealed to a growing sense of French national pride during the de Gaulle regime with Asterix and his gigantic pal, Obelix, defeating the Roman legions at every turn, thanks to their magical strength. The humor of the strip is gentle rather than biting, depending a great deal on puns and anachronisms (without quite the satiric overtones of, say, B.C., which, in regard to puns and anachronisms, is a similar strip). Most of the illustrations here come from the French fanzine, SCHTROUMPF; and most of my information from Dwight Decker's article in THE COMIC JOURNAL #38 --a complete and competent discussion of ASTERIX and its creators, drawn in part from Decker's translation of the SCHTROUMPF features on Goscinny. Bud Plant carries a complete line of the ASTERIX books, most of them in English.

C'EST ICI QUE NOUS FAISONS CONNAISSANCE AVEC NOTRE HEROS, LE GUERRIER ASTERIX QUI VA S'ADONNER A SON SPORT FAVORI: LA CHASSE.
TU REVIENS BIENTÔT ASTERIX?
JE SERAI DE RETOUR POUR DÉJEUNER OBELIX..

The first appearance of Asterix and Obelix in 1959.


I SAID KNOCK! I DIDN'T SAY SMASH IT IN!
DON'T SHOUT, ASTERIX. YOU KNOW THAT KNOCKING AND SMASHING ARE THE SAME TO ME!
WHAT'S ALL THIS?

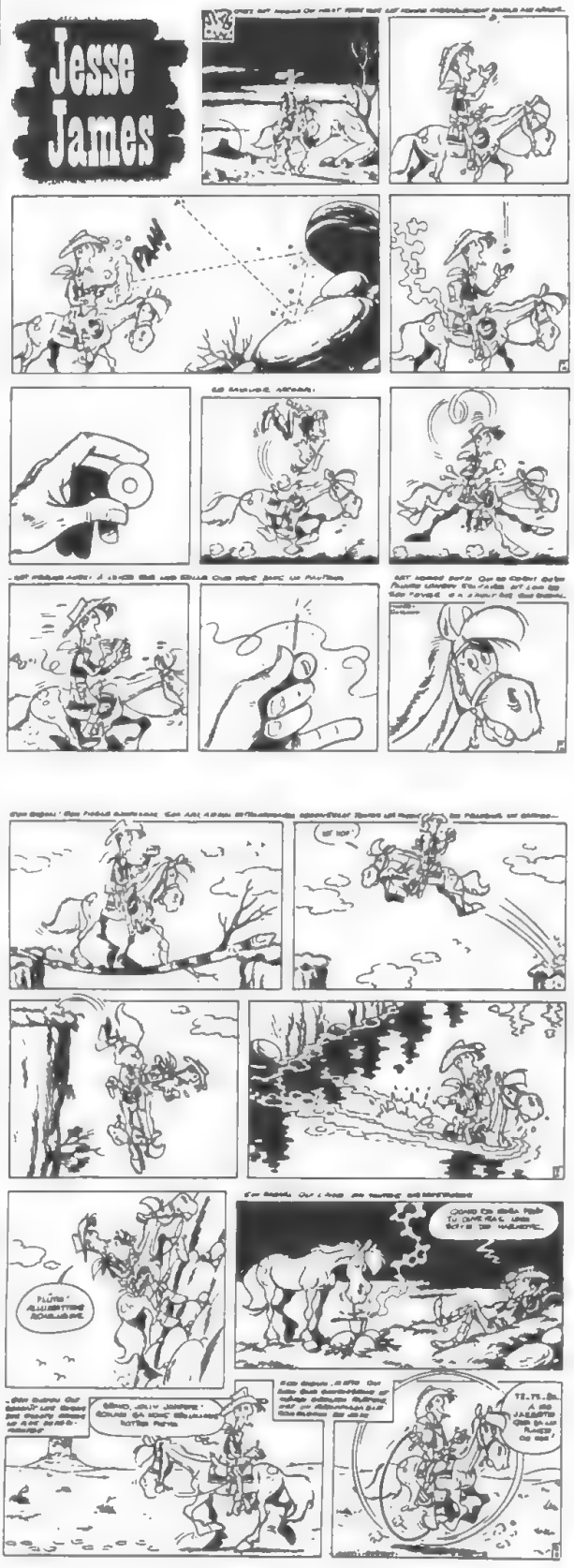
A sample of the syndicated daily strip--a retelling of the story in ASTERIX THE GLADIATOR.

Unhappily, Gerber's preoccupation with the question of identity is so persistent that he cannot let it alone. Even having dealt explicitly with it twice (in HTD #4 and in the "insanity" series), he returns to it again in HTD#16 in which he forces us to wander through the twilight zones of his soul as he wrestles once more with the problem of freedom and responsibility.

Although the dilemmas of the creative artist can be broadened to embrace the human condition generally (hence achieving some measure of universal appeal), the metaphor of Artist = Everyman wears a little thin after awhile. Moreover, as he continues to explore under different guises the same questions, Gerber begins to look more and more like a satirist with one subject. With a wealth of potential targets before him, Gerber seems inclined to subsume them all under his single over-riding concern. The final effect is that HOWARD threatens to become a purely personal vehicle, an exercise in philosophical autobiography. The more personal HOWARD becomes, the less appeal it will have for mass audiences. And the more philosophical the personal diatribe waxes, the vaguer the satire becomes.

One can't help concluding that HOWARD's initial success warped the author's satiric perceptions. Certainly the more personally philosophical the books become, the more self indulgent they are--culminating, for the nonce, in the jejune breast-beating of #16.

Later, Gerber even stoops to attacking personal "enemies." When we meet Doctor Bong, we find out that he is really "Lester Verde"--who began his climb to power as an amoral, sensationalizing, power-hungry journalist. "Verde" is Spanish for "green," and Bob Green is a syndicated Chicago Sun-Times columnist who once attacked



Lucky Luke appears here on a couple of the introductory pages from the JESSE JAMES volume. This strip, drawn by Morris, is, as Decker notes, entirely different from ASTERIX. No puns here, the strip is essentially a parody of the American cowboy and the legends of the Old West. Luke's adventures, as Decker says, involve complex plotting and running gags of a visual kind.

Gerber's KISS project--"pointing out that the creeps in Kiss were about to replace Superman, Batman, and Captain Marvel as children's heroes" and mentioning "some of the repulsive excesses that Kiss includes in its stage show."

Reaction, says Green, was strong. Parents all over the country wrote to Marvel. Gerber was so upset, Green suggests, that he took revenge on Green by making him the thoroughly unsavory journalist who eventually became the villainous Doctor Bong.

I mention the Green episode because it is the logical consequence of Gerber's increasingly (for a time) personal absorbsion in HOWARD. Since Gerber seemed to treat HOWARD as a vehicle for exorcising his own existential angst, it was inevitable that he use the duck as a weapon when he felt personally assaulted.

But in surrendering to this temptation, Gerber not only brought HOWARD to its philosophical nadir--he also weakened the series' claim to be satire by making it too personal. All satire arises from the artist's sense of personal abuse; but only when that sense accords with similar feelings among a vast number of readers does the satire rise above mere personal raging, the impotent outrage of a frustrated infant.

Judging from the more recent issues of HTD, Gerber has purged himself of his wholly personal hangups. And a couple of recent issues have been virtually single-subject issues --another improvement. The considerable promise HOWARD showed in the first five numbers now

It is the artwork in ASTERIX that first strikes American fans --in lavish full color and meticulous detail. Like many humorous European strips, ASTERIX features cartoony characters who cavort across realistically rendered landscapes, every prop and detail drawn with exacting fidelity to reality. It is clearly the Disney influence at work. Al Uderzo, ASTERIX's artist, confesses an affection for "the Disney fairyland" --and for animation in general.

ASTERIX often has about it the "feel" of animated action--as in this page.

TU N'AS QU'À DESCENDRE PAR CE VERSANT DE LA MONTAGNE. IL TE CONDUIRA JUSQU'À TON PAYS.
OUI, MAIS OBÉLIX DORT TOUJOURS. JE VAIS ÊTRE OBLIGÉ DE LE REMORQUER.
AU REVOIR, HELVÈTES! JE N'OUBLIERAI JAMAIS CE QUE VOUS AVEZ FAIT POUR NOUS, ET JE LE RACONTERAI À OBÉLIX!
EEEEH!
LES VOILÀ!
HALTE, GAULOIS! AU NOM DU GOUVERNEUR DIPLODOCUS, REPRÉSENTANT DE CÉSAR, HALTE!
ÉCARTEZ-VOUS!
FLOTCH!!

seems likely to emerge once again. And I, for one, will be pleased.

Howard will doubtless survive in his comic book. But his fate in newspaper form is less certain. In fact, I suspect he won't last out the year.

Judging from the first adventure (which dealt with popular psychology--as a self-deluding rather than as a scientific exercise), Gerber has not learned how to deliver his satire in the characteristically short, daily jabs of the newspaper strip format. The daily format highlights a problem that emerged in the multiple issue stories of the books. Gerber's style is to accummulate satiric metaphors, which, taken all together, give both weight and substance to his attacks. The cummulative effect loses a great deal when it must take place through more than one issue of the book: the meaning of what happened in an earlier issue is sometimes lost by the time a later one arrives. The same problem renders much of the newspaper HOWARD vague to the point of meaninglessness.

Not many readers will long tolerate a comic strip that seems to them meaningless --and newspaper editors won't be long in anticipating their readers' reactions.

Meanwhile, we'll have Howard in the books. Howard's nearly cultish following can muster the purchasing power to secure HTD's financial life in book form--even if they can't manage the same in the wider arena of the daily newspaper.

Speaking of Marvel's newspaper strip ventures brings us to VERA VALIANT, SPIDER-MAN, and CONAN. VERA is already dead: the strip lasted only as long as its inspiration, MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN. So much for basing a strip on flash-in-the-pan fads.

The vitality of the webslinger seems assured: it rests on the wide popularity of the comic books.

But I predict for CONAN as short a newspaper life as HOWARD's. Like HTD, Conan appeals to a small (albeit discriminating) readership--too small to sustain a move from the comparatively small circulation comic books to the larger audiences of daily newspapers.

-HARV

GIRLS OF comicopia

• Al Uderzo may not be one of the world's best-known drawers of lovely ladies, but he can do a creditably eye-popping job, so it seems appropriate to give him a little space in this corner this time. If for no other reason than the novelty of seeing Asterix and Obelix a-gog.

WE ARE
NOT ALONE